IURCH or DISSENT

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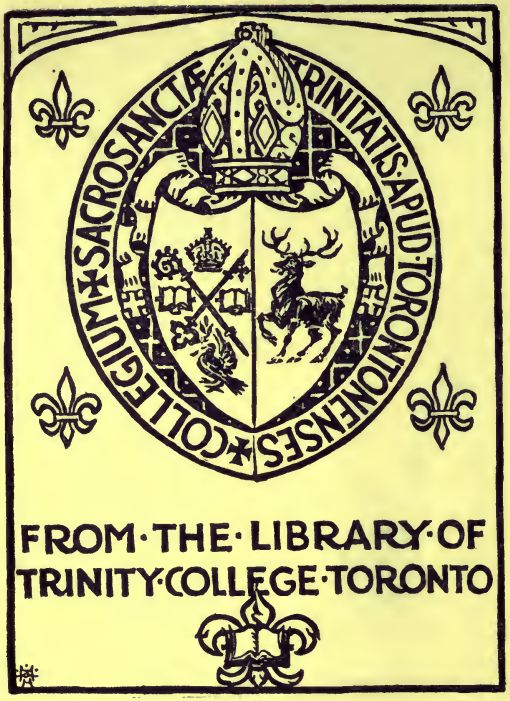

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CHURCH OR DISSENT?

An Appeal to Holy Scripture.

(ADDRESSED TO DISSENTERS.)

BY

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"What saith the Scripture?"—ROM. iv. 3.

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PREFACE.

THE object of the writer in issuing this little book to the public is to supply a need which he has himself felt in the charge of a parish. There were not a few Bible-loving Dissenters, leading upright lives, who it was evident had no adequate, if indeed any, conception of the *sin* of schism. The prevalent idea seemed to be that each one was to judge for himself in matters of faith, and that if his convictions led him to join some sect, it was open to him to do so, and that he would "be saved by the Law or Sect which he professed."

Apart from all the evils of schism in a parish, the disquiet engendered, the obstruction, the waste of religious power that resulted, it was a constant trouble to see this disregard of the expressed will of God on the unity of His Church. It is often said, "Why not accept Dissent?" The answer is, that *as a fact* there is no choice but to accept it. In all religious calculations it is a necessary factor. But so long as the Bible is the Church's rule of faith, it can never be accepted as agreeable to the will of God. Not to look on Dissent as sin (though, doubtless, in most

cases a sin of ignorance) would be inconsistent with the petition to be delivered "from all heresy and schism." A clergyman's ordination vows "to drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's Word by public and private monitions and exhortations" leave him no choice but to break silence. He may no doubt deal with the subject from the pulpit, but the writer, in common with many of his brethren, felt scrupulous about devoting any considerable proportion of his sermons to controverted topics when the regular members of the congregation had other needs.

There was another course open to him, to reason with the Dissenting members of his flock in his parochial visits. But any one who knows how difficult it is to convince in a personal discussion, will not wonder that the writer shrank from this uncongenial and generally useless task. Any such discussion must necessarily partake of the nature of an argument. There is a position to be assailed and defended, and so much that is personal is at stake, that a successful issue is from the first prejudiced.

The third and preferable alternative appeared to be that of leaving on his rounds a book on the subject to be quietly perused in private. Such a book, adapted, say, to the capacity of the intelligent mechanic, or that large and rapidly increasing class that reads our cheap press, he has sought in vain. There are, it is needless to say, several works of high intellectual merit and exhaustive treatment bearing on the sub-

ject, but no recent attempt has been made to strike that stratum of society in which the strength of Dissent lies. It is this class which, from its very intelligence, must, next to the teachers, be held answerable for the religious division that prevails; and one of the religious problems of the day is how to bring within its reach the considerations which to those most deeply versed in the subject have been found conclusive.

The Dissenters of the rural districts, on the other hand, are so either from traditions they have inherited or owing to surrounding influences. These are barely capable of forming an independent judgment on such a question in all its breadth, and are therefore to be won less by argument than by the silent influences of kindly acts and an active and devoted ministry. If any appeal to their reasoning powers be made, it should be of a slighter character than the present work, and perhaps take the form of a tract dealing directly with the distinctive tenets of the sect to which they belong. Of such tracts, admirably adapted to this purpose, there is no lack, and the number is being rapidly augmented.

The present work, however, does not attempt to intrude upon this ground. It deals rather with that which is common to all, the sin of schism. Not, then, doctrine but discipline, not heresy but schism, is its province. Such a work adapted to such a class the writer had not been able to find; he resolved, therefore, if God gave him opportunity, to attempt the

work himself, to provide in a compact and portable form what may be of service to the parochial clergyman as a lending book. That opportunity came in a period of enforced inactivity consequent upon illness.

The standpoint, then, from which this book is written is a direct appeal to God's written Word, that common ground upon which all Christians meet. There must be many who are now halting between two opinions, to whom some such book as this may be of service. There must be not a few Dissenters who cannot resist the plain evidence of Scripture when placed before them, and who, when they see religious divisions unmistakably condemned, will not hesitate to leave the ranks of Dissent, cost them what it may, for their Lord's sake.

The writer has sought to avoid the mistake of merely exposing error, and has therefore in each case endeavoured to supply the correlative truth, to "overcome evil with good." Thus he has been able to deal with more than one great Church principle. Amongst others may be mentioned the following: the three orders of the ministry, the validity of ministerial acts independent of the personal merits of the minister, the Liturgy, the continuity of the Church of England not interrupted by the Reformation, the principle of a National Church. These are issues which, so far as it is possible to read the signs of the times, are coming to the surface, not only in this land but all over Europe. They demand, and that soon, on the part of the Church a special religious literature of their own.

To this the present book, in default of a better, is a humble contribution.

In putting it forth the writer would disclaim any pretence of originality or literary merit. On the contrary, the arguments are not new, and the style is designedly familiar. It is hoped and believed that it is free from party bias, so that it may be as widely useful as possible. He has striven to act upon the Scriptural precept "to instruct in meekness them that oppose themselves." He now sends forth the result of his labour, with the earnest prayer that it may be to the advancement of God's glory and the good of His Church.

FROM THE WRITER TO THE READER.

MY Brother in Christ, this book has been placed in your hands, and you will have time to read it carefully by yourself, and to think over it calmly. But at the very outset let me beseech you to ask the guidance of God. No harm can come of it, if you do that; no good can follow without that guidance.

Will you pray this short prayer every time you take up this book? And may God give you grace to hold yourself free to follow His leading!

O most merciful Father, Who hast promised to give to them that ask the help of Thy Holy Spirit, guide me, I pray Thee, by the same Spirit into all truth. Open mine understanding that I may understand the Scriptures; and give me a right judgment, that in this inquiry I may prove what is Thy good and acceptable and perfect will; and may have grace in deed to fulfil the same; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

One word more. You will read things that are new to you in this book—things that go against your former convictions, though I trust not a word to hurt

your feelings. Do not hastily reject what is said. Try it prayerfully, by God's Word, like the Bereans of old, who "searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts xvii. 11). And seek to read in a meek and lowly spirit, because there is a promise to all such: "The meek will He guide in judgment; and the meek will He teach His way" (Ps. xxv. 9).

CHURCH OR DISSENT?

INTRODUCTION.

FROM time to time during the last 300 years bodies of earnest Christians have left the Church of England because they disagreed with some point in her doctrine or practice.[1] It would be quite out of our power in a book of this size to attempt to examine even the chief points of difference, for there are more than 100 Dissenting bodies, each of which dissents from all the others as well as from the Church of England.[2]

[1] The Independents were the first to break away, about 1568 (Curteis's "Bampton Lectures," p. 39).

[2] Sects in England.

The following is a list of religious denominations certified to the Registrar-General as having places of worship in England and Wales :—

Advents, The; Apostolics, Arminian New Society, Baptists, Baptized Believers, Believers in Christ, Bible Christians, Bible Defence Association, Brethren, Calvinists and Welsh Calvinists, Calvinistic Baptists, Catholic Apostolic Church, Chapels of other Wesleyans than those enumerated, Christians owning no name but the Lord Jesus, Christians who object to be otherwise designated, Christian Believers, Christian Brethren, Christian Eliasites, Christian Israelites, Christian Mission, Christian Teetotallers, Christian Temperance Men, Christian Unionists,

PART I.—The question we would here discuss is whether all this religious dissension is according to the revealed will of God, and whether a Christian is

Christadelphians, Church of Scotland, Church of Christ, Church of the People, Church of Progress, Congregational Temperance Free Church, Countess of Huntingdon's Connection, Coventry Mission Band, Danish Lutherans, Disciples in Christ, Disciples of Jesus Christ, Eastern Orthodox Greek Church, Eclectics, Episcopalian Dissenters, Evangelical Mission, Evangelical Unionists, Followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, Free Catholic Christian Church, Free Christians, Free Christian Association, Free Church, Free Church (Episcopal), Free Church of England, Free Grace Gospel Christians, Free Gospel and Christian Brethren, Free Gospel Church, Free Methodists, Free Union Church, General Baptists, General Baptist New Connection, German Lutherans, German Roman Catholics, Glassites, Glory Band, Greek Catholics, Halifax Psychological Society, Hallelujah Band, Hope Mission, Humanitarians, Independents, Independent Methodists, Independent Religious Reformers, Independent Unionists, Inghamites, Israelites, Jews, Latter Day Saints, Lutherans, Modern Methodists, Moravians, Mormons, New Church, New Connection General Baptists, New Connection Wesleyans, New Jerusalem Church, New Methodists, Old Baptists, Orthodox Eastern Church, Particular Baptists, Peculiar People, Plymouth Brethren, Polish Society, Portsmouth Mission, Presbyterian Church in England, Presbyterian Baptists, Primitive Free Church, Primitive Methodists, Progressionists, Protestant Members of the Church of England, Protestants adhering to Articles 1 to 18, but rejecting Ritual; Protestant Union, Providence, Quakers, Ranters, Rational Christians, Reformers, Reformed Church of England, Reformed Presbyterians or Covenanters, Recreative Religionists, Refuge Methodists, Reform Free Church Wesleyan Methodists, Revivalists, Revival Band, Roman Catholics, Salem Society, Sandemanians, Scotch Baptists, Second Advent Brethren, Separatists (Protestant), Seventh Day Baptists, Society of the New Church, Spiritual Church, Spiritualists, Strict Baptists, Swedenborgians, Temperance Methodists, Testimony Congre-

justified in separating from the Church because he or she inclines to the teaching or practice of one of the dissenting bodies. Has God left it an open question for each to decide according to his inclination or convictions? Or has He in His Holy Word made known His will? Let this be our first inquiry.

PART II.—We will then touch on some of the main objections levelled against the Church of England; most of which, we believe, rest on misconception, and are, therefore, capable of explanation.

PART III.—Lastly, we will examine some of the pleas more commonly urged in justification of Dissent.

gational Church, Trinitarians, Union Baptists, Union Churchmen, Union Congregationalists, Union Free Church, Unionists, Unitarians, Unitarian Baptists, Unitarian Christians, United Christian Church, United Free Methodist Church, United Brethren or Moravians, United Presbyterians, Unsectarian, Welsh Calvinistic Methodists, Welsh Free Presbyterians, Welsh Wesleyan Methodists, Wesleyans, Wesleyan Methodist Association, Wesleyan Reformers, Wesleyan Reform Glory Band, Working Man's Evangelical Mission Chapels.

It is evident that in the above list there are some repetitions, and it is possible that there may be some omissions. At whatever number the religious sects are to be estimated, it is certain that each year witnesses an increase, notwithstanding that from time to time former entries disappear from the roll.

To take the Registrar-General's Return, the number in 1871 was 117; in 1874, 131; while in 1876 it had risen to 143.

The sin of Jeroboam was that of both heresy and schism – a sin against the unity of God's people, who had one sanctuary, one priesthood one worship; for Jeroboam made a new sanctuary, a new priesthood and a new order of worship.
This fact needs emphasising in these days, when, to use the words of Bishop Jewell, "men begin to give less credit to their words than they were wont to do". For, indeed, men do most falsely confuse the principles of liberty and the dominion of licence.

PART I.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT DISSENT.

TO bring, then, this matter to the test of God's Holy Word. If on one side or the other can be pleaded those authoritative words, "*It is written*," uttered by our Lord Himself, from which there is no appeal, then with that side let the issue remain.

Let us first open our Bible at the Old Testament; and in case any one should think lightly of the Old Testament, as the manner of some is, let us remind him that those were the only Scriptures which our Master used. It was those He quoted, those He bade His disciples search, for they testified of Him. The Old Testament has, on this account, been aptly called "the Saviour's Bible." Not one jot or one tittle of those Scriptures but has its lesson for us, "for whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning" (Rom. xv. 4). Let us, then, search for the will of God on this matter in the Old Testament.

i.—*The sin of Jeroboam the Son of Nebat.*

There is one record that occurs again and again in the history of the kingdom of Israel. Indeed, from the

Liberty teaches me to do what I ought.
licence allows me to do what I like.
Liberty is the principle of Christ.
licence is the dominion of Anti-Christ.

days of the separation of the kingdom of Israel to its final captivity by the Assyrians, the stages of its downfall are traced back to "Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin." As king after king arose and passed away we come upon this record, "He did evil in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin, wherewith he made Israel to sin."

Now, what was this sin so strongly denounced by the Holy Spirit?

Was it *rebellion?* No; for God Himself gave the ten tribes to Jeroboam, signifying it by the mouth of His prophet; and, on Rehoboam gathering an army to recover his inheritance, He interposed, saying, "Return every man to his house; for this thing is from Me" (1 Kings xi. 29-31; xii. 24).

Was it the *worship of false gods?* No; for Solomon, not Jeroboam, was the first to introduce the worship of the false gods of the surrounding nations. "Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. . . . Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem; and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon" (1 Kings xi. 5, 7, 33). And, further, the sin of Jeroboam is more than once contrasted with the worship of Baal.

"It came to pass as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that . . . he (Ahab) went and served Baal, and worshipped him" (1 Kings xvi. 31). And of Jehoram, his son, it is recorded, "he wrought evil in the sight of the Lord; but not like his father, and like his mother: for

he put away the image of Baal that his father had made. Nevertheless he cleaved unto the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin; he departed not therefrom" (2 Kings iii. 2, 3).

Whatever the sin in question was, it is evident that it was peculiar to the kingdom of Israel, for it is never attributed to the kingdom of Judah, though more than one of its kings was guilty of apostacy. The sin, too, is invariably specified as the sin of Jeroboam, though adopted by all his successors. It may be argued from this that all its essentials are to be found in this its first stage, and are not to be sought in any later development of gross idolatry.

It was not rebellion, it was not the worship of false gods, it was a distinct sin. Idolatrous *Schism*[1] was the sin of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. This will be apparent if we consult the Scriptural account.

As soon as Jeroboam had been made king over the ten tribes of Israel he foresaw a danger: "Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David: if this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah. Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem:[2] behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee

[1] *Schism* is derived from the same word as *scissors*, and signifies *division.*

[2] "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem." How often the first plea of religious division—not opposition in this stage,

up out of the land of Egypt. And he set up the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan. *And this thing became a sin:* for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan. And he made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi" (1 Kings xii. 26—31).

Now let us not suppose that Jeroboam cast off the worship of Jehovah. That was not his object. He distinctly says, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." If that means anything, it means that they should still worship the same gods (*Elohim*, the very word used for the Triune God in the Book of Genesis) without the trouble of going up to Jerusalem. He offers them at Dan and at Bethel all they had enjoyed heretofore at the Temple of Jerusalem.

Neither let us think that they worshipped the golden calves.[1] It should be observed that the calves acquire no distinctive title. They are never styled anything

but accommodation! How often, too, it has in it a political element!

[1] The theory that they were borrowed representations of the two ox-idols of the Egyptians, Apis and Mnevis, is improbable, as in that case there would be some indication of the calves being regarded as *two* gods. Of this there is no trace.

It is possible, as has been suggested, that the calves were intended to represent the two golden Cherubim of the Ark of the Covenant, which, like the "living creatures" in Ezekiel's vision, may have been in the shape of winged calves (Ezek. i. 6—11; x. 14; Rev. iv. 7; 1 Kings vii. 29. See learned notes on "Cherubim" in Smith's Dictionary, and the "Speaker's Commentary," vol. i. p. 49). If so, the setting them up at the two

but calves. They are not overthrown as Dagon was. The Divine judgment almost seems to ignore them, and is launched rather against the altar and the worshippers. Evidently they were intended to be the symbol of the God of Israel, the Same which brought them up out of the land of Egypt. Consequently the Ten Tribes worshipped Jehovah *under that form*. They broke the *second*, not the *first* commandment. Just as Aaron in the wilderness "changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass," so at this time, to use the Apostle's words, "the glory of the incorruptible God was *changed*;" not, let us note, abjured, but "changed into an image made like four-footed beasts" (Ps. cvi. 20; Rom. i. 23).

The special significance of Jeroboam's act can only be seen by a careful examination of God's message to him by the mouth of the prophet Ahijah (1 Kings xi. 31—39). In that message Jerusalem is spoken of as "*the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel*" (v. 32): *the city which I have chosen Me to put My Name there*" (36).

There can be no mistaking the reference. It was an injunction of the Mosaic Law to Israel, "Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest; *but in the place which the Lord shall choose in one of thy tribes*," "*which the Lord thy God shall choose to set His Name there*" [1]

extremities of the kingdom was, perhaps, to suggest that it was the true ark of God.—*Prof. Rawlinson.*

[1] The above formula is repeated twenty-one times in the Book of Deuteronomy.

A supposed attempt on the part of the two and a half tribes

(Deut xii. 13, 14; xiv. 23). The Temple at Jerusalem was that place: "He refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim: but chose the tribe of Judah, the Mount Zion which He loved" (Ps. lxxviii. 67, 68; cxxxii. 13, 14). That choice had been solemnly announced at the recent dedication of the Temple: "I have heard thy prayer, *and have chosen this place to Myself for an house of sacrifice*:" "*I have chosen and sanctified this house, that My Name may be there for ever*" (2 Chron. vii. 12, 16).

The only question is, how far was this affected by the authorized partition of the kingdom. We must remember that Israel was not only a kingdom but also a Church (Acts vii. 38). Consequently the promise had been *twofold*: "Since the day that I brought forth My people out of the land of Egypt I chose no city among all the tribes of Israel to build an house in, that My Name might be there; neither chose I any man to be a ruler over My people Israel: but I have chosen Jerusalem, that My Name might be there; and have chosen David to be over My people Israel" (2 Chron. vi. 5, 6). The promise as to the kingdom was recalled by reason of the idolatry of Solomon; but

settled east of Jordan to violate the religious unity of the nation is narrated in Joshua xxii. It provoked the fierce indignation of the children of Israel, which was only allayed on the earnest repudiation by the accused of the design imputed to them: "God forbid that we should rebel against the Lord, and turn this day from following the Lord, to build an altar for burnt-offerings, for meat-offerings, or for sacrifices, beside the altar of the Lord our God that is before His tabernacle" (Josh. xxii. 29). The record is important as establishing the fact that the duty of religious unity was universally recognized by the Israelites.

the unity of the Church was still to be maintained till the end of the Dispensation (2 Chron. vi. 38; Dan. vi. 10; Jon. ii. 4; Mat. v. 35; John iv. 20). It was a continuous thread of Divine purpose, one end of which we take up at the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai (Ex. xx. 24), and the other we find on the Day of Pentecost, when devout men out of every nation under heaven gathered to Jerusalem (Acts ii. 5—12). Even after the interruption of the Babylonish Captivity, the Mind of God (we say it reverently) reverted to His original purpose (Ezra i. 2; Neh. i. 9). Unquestionably, then, there were to be two kingdoms, but not two Churches. That there might be no misunderstanding on this point, in His message to Jeroboam announcing the division of the kingdom God once more specifies Jerusalem as the religious centre in these words, "*the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel*," "*the city which I have chosen Me to put My Name there.*"[1] In no other light could an *Israelite* have understood them.

Nevertheless, Jeroboam set himself, in defiance of God, to prevent the ten tribes from going up to Jerusalem to do sacrifice. This is the key to his whole policy. "*If this people go up to do sacrifice in the House of the Lord at Jerusalem*, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah. Whereupon the king took

[1] This expression is repeated from time to time throughout the history of the Southern Kingdom (1 Kings xiv. 21; 2 Kings xxi. 7; xxiii. 27; 2 Chron. xxxiii. 7). It stands out in relief against the parallel record of the Northern Kingdom, "the sin of Jeroboam the son of Nebat who made Israel to sin."

counsel," &c. It is implied that but for this the people would have gone up. But for this there had been no sin of schism. But "Jeroboam the son of Nebat made Israel to sin."

It was a fearful aggravation of this sin, when pandering to the natural hankering after a visible symbol of Deity he set up the golden calves, not scrupling to use almost the very words uttered by Aaron in the wilderness, "Behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt" (see Ex. xxxii. 4).[1]

[1] Aaron, it is plain, had no intention of repudiating the worship of Jehovah, for he made proclamation, "To-morrow is a feast to the Lord (*Jehovah*)" (Ex. xxxii. 5). The calf was to be the visible symbol of Deity. In this respect the two sins were identical, but the distinctive feature of Jeroboam's sin was *schism*. The character of the idolatry varied from reign to reign. The calves were at one time means, at another ends of worship. First it was a breach of the Second, then of the First Commandment. But the one fixed element in Jeroboam's sin was its schism. Is it on this account that the writer of the Book of Kings never traces it back to Aaron's sin, but treats it as *sui generis*, "the sin of Jeroboam the son of Nebat who made Israel to sin"?

There are those who insist that it was simply a breach of the Second Commandment, and ask where is religious unity there inculcated. The connection is not so remote. The Ten Commandments were given to "an holy nation, a peculiar people" whom God chose to Himself. In the First Commandment He enjoined on this chosen people one Divine Object of worship. By the Second He guarded that worship from corruption: none might "make to himself" his own type of worship. Is not religious unity contemplated here?

Jeroboam went directly to this point. He deliberately set himself to break that unity by corrupting the true worship. The idolatry gave distinctiveness to the schism; the schism tended to disseminate the idolatry.

A third feature of Jeroboam's sin was that he set at nought God's ordinance by which the priesthood was confined to the line of Aaron. In his anxiety to enlist the popular support on his side, "he made priests of the lowest of the people, *which were not of the sons of Levi;*" "whosoever would he consecrated him, and he became one of the priests of the high places" (1 Kings xii. 31; xiii. 33). That this was no light sin may be gathered from the fate of Korah and his company, and the punishment inflicted on Saul and Uzziah (Numb. xvi.; 1 Sam. xiii. 13; 2 Chron. xxvi. 19).

To attempt to separate these sins and to assign to each its measure of guilt would be presumptuous. We can only regard them as the fruit of the same evil disposition of a wilful heart. Regarding, therefore, the sin of Jeroboam as the worship of the true God in an unauthorized way, in unauthorized places, with unauthorized ministers, we cannot but see much to identify it, in its main features, with *Schism*, or *Dissent;* though we scarcely need to add, the guilt in each case will vary according as the aggravations are present or absent.

Let us follow out this inquiry a stage further. In carrying out this far-sighted scheme, it is evident he met with opposition from the priests and Levites, the ordained ministry of God, for in the Second Book of Chronicles we read that he cast them off from executing the priests' office before the Lord, and ordained him priests for the high places (2 Chron. xi. 14). Whereupon the priests and Levites resorted to Jerusalem, and "after them out of all the tribes of Israel

such as set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel came to Jerusalem, to sacrifice unto the Lord God of their fathers!" So that some, at least, refused to join in the schismatic worship : some remembered that Jerusalem was the city which God had chosen to set His Name there.

It will be asked, Why did Jeroboam select Dan and Bethel? We can plainly discern a reason for the first, for Dan was already a stronghold of Dissent. There is an account in the Book of Judges (chap. xviii.) of a colony of Danites moving northward. On their way they lodged with one Micah, and carried away certain images that he had, together with a Levite whom they compelled to accompany them, in order to give a colour of authority to the strange worship they set up in a town in the extreme north of the land, which they named Dan, after their old home in the south—and this, we are told, during "*all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh*" (Judges xviii. 31).

It was in this very town, and as we cannot doubt for this reason, that Jeroboam set up a golden calf; and here the strange worship struck root at once, "for the people went to worship before *the one, even unto Dan.*"

Bethel was selected for a different, though equally intelligible reason. It was the place of all others that had sacred associations with the old worship of Jehovah. It was hard by Shiloh where the tabernacle had stood (Judges xxi. 19). It was the place where Jacob not only saw his vision of the heavenly ladder, but on his return built an altar to the Lord in obedience to His command (Gen. xxxv. 1, 6). Here, too,

it would seem, he wrestled with the angel (Hos. xii. 4, 5). It was here that the people resorted in the time of the Judges to inquire of the Lord.[1] It was here that the ark rested for a time under the charge of Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron. No spot could be found more closely associated with the old worship, and for this reason Jeroboam chose it as a centre for the new worship. It would seem to trace back a religious descent to the Patriarch whose children they delighted to be called. The very name Bethel[2] ("the house of God") would create a predisposition in its favour, and serve to recall the fervid words, "This is none other but the House of God, and this is the Gate of Heaven" (Gen. xxviii. 17). "So Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the 15th day of the month, *like unto the feast that is in Judah*, and he offered upon the altar. So did he in Bethel, sacrificing unto the calves that he made; and he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made."

See how careful he was to observe the very feast that was observed in Judah, so as to give a colour to

[1] Judges xx. 18, 26; xxi. 2. It is to be regretted that our translators did not retain in these instances the proper name, Bethel, instead of substituting for it its signification of "The house of the Lord." See Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible," *s.v.* Bethel.

[2] The writer of the article on "Bethel" in Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible," remarks upon the "intense significance" of this title, and points out how it has been turned to account—"the very syllables of Jacob's exclamation, forming the title of the chief sanctuary of the Mahometan world—the Beit-allah of Mecca—while they are no less the favourite designation of the meanest conventicles of the humblest sects of Protestant Christendom."

the plea that they did but worship the same Jehovah, though in another way. Wherever his scheme admitted of it, he adhered closely to the old religion. The Mosaic offering for consecration to the priesthood was observed to the letter (Ex. xxix. 35, 36; 2 Chron. xiii. 9). The Sabbaths, the new moons, and the old Calendar of fast and festival were retained (Hos. ii. 11; ix. 5). Indeed the whole feast at Bethel and the part that Jeroboam assumed in it was apparently a servile imitation of Solomon's consecration of the Temple (1 Kings viii. 2, 5, 22). It was not his object to introduce a false worship, but a separate worship. The changes, he would urge, were merely to accommodate the old religion to the altered circumstances of the kingdom, without affecting its identity. How plausibly would he represent that the essentials were the same: it was only a variation of externals—mere forms and ceremonies!

Now we come to the all-important inquiry, How did God regard that worship in another way, a worship that Jeroboam "devised of his own heart" (1 Kings xii. 33)? We are not left in doubt.

"Behold, there came a man of God[1] out of Judah

[1] Ancient Jewish tradition identifies him with Iddo: cf. 2 Chron. ix. 29, "the visions of Iddo the seer against Jeroboam the son of Nebat."

There was a fitness in the prophet who was to denounce the schismatic worship of Israel coming out of Judah, for where else was a faithful prophet to be found? It is expressly stated in 2 Chron. xi. 16, that "such as set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel" had gone to Jerusalem. That the "old prophet" should still be living at Bethel after this general exodus of the faithful, shows that he was at least of doubtful fidelity; added to

by the word of the Lord unto Bethel; and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense. And he cried against the altar in the word of the Lord, and said, O altar, altar! thus saith the Lord: Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee" (1 Kings xiii.). So God's displeasure rested upon that unauthorized worship. More than this, the altar cannot hold the sacrifice. "The altar was rent, and the ashes poured out from the altar." This is a sign we may not disregard. Such a sacrifice finds no favour with God.[1]

Still the sin went on. There were political reasons why the people should not be suffered to go up to Jerusalem to worship. The ten tribes might be

which the solemn prohibition to the prophet of Judah, "*Thou shalt eat no bread nor drink water there*," interpreted by his transgression and punishment, plainly included the old prophet in what amounted to a sentence of excommunication. Feeling himself compromised, in common with all Bethel, by this announcement of the Word of the Lord, the old prophet doubtless sought to recover his position by associating with the man of God out of Judah. Then follow the unscrupulous means, the false assertion, "an angel spake unto me"—a claim to a personal revelation which is so often made to override the plain Word of God; finally, when too late, the ineffectual lament over the partaker of his sin, "alas, my brother!"

[1] Of the effect of that irregular worship on another generation we have significant proof. It led, as might be expected, to defiance of all authority. It was at Bethel, at a later date, that the very children came forth to mock God's accredited prophet, and were destroyed by bears (2 Kings ii. 23, 24). Also the man who, in defiance of the curse of God, rebuilt Jericho, was Hiel, the Bethelite (1 Kings xvi. 34).

tempted to return to their allegiance to the house of David. So one by one the kings come and go, and there is still the same record, "He departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin." It is true that each in turn did but maintain the form of worship that he found already existing. Still it was accounted sin that "he departed not" from it.

And there were not wanting indications of what was the will of God. The twelve cakes of the shew-bread in the Temple at Jerusalem (Lev. xxiv. 5) and the high priest bearing on his ephod the names of the twelve tribes were standing protests against this division (Ex. xxviii. 9—13). On one memorable occasion this protest was made even before the schismatic tribes themselves. In that scene on Mount Carmel, when Elijah met the prophets of Baal, it is significantly recorded that he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down, evidently an old altar of the days when Israel was undivided; for watch the prophet's actions: "Elijah took *twelve* stones, *according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob*, unto whom the word of the Lord came, saying, Israel shall be thy name: and with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord" (1 Kings xviii. 31, 32). That action could only be a protest against the religious division that prevailed.[1] By it he proclaims

[1] For many traces of the worship of Jehovah being still prevalent side by side with that of Baal, see Blunt's "Undesigned Coincidences," part ii. pp. 198, 199. This explains Elijah's challenge, "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him" (1 Kings xviii. 21).

that he is no prophet of a sect; he is the prophet of the Lord to all the twelve tribes of the chosen people.

Nor may we omit the effort made by King Hezekiah to restore the unity of the Church. "And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, to keep the passover unto the Lord God of Israel. . . . So they established a decree to make proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beersheba even to Dan, that they should come to keep the passover unto the Lord God of Israel at Jerusalem: for they had not done it of a long time in such sort as it was written. . . . Now be ye not stiff-necked, as your fathers were, but yield yourselves unto the Lord, and enter into His sanctuary, which He hath sanctified for ever: and serve the Lord your God, that the fierceness of His wrath may turn away from you. . . . And all the congregation of Judah, with the priests and the Levites, and all the congregation that came out of Israel, and the strangers that came out of the land of Israel, and that dwelt in Judah, rejoiced. So there was great joy in Jerusalem: for since the time of Solomon the son of David King of Israel there was not the like in Jerusalem"[1] (2 Chron. xxx. 1, 5, 8, 25, 26).

At last those ten tribes were carried away into

[1] In like manner Israelites seem to have participated in the religious festivals that crowned the Reformations of Asa and Josiah (2 Chron. xv. 9; xxxv. 17, 18). All true Reformations have a tendency to reunion on the basis of primitive doctrine and practice. It was because it fell short in this respect that Jehu's attempted Reformation in the Northern Kingdom so soon failed (2 Kings x. 28—31).

captivity, and we see them no more. Those that had sinned were gone, but the sin must not pass uncondemned. More than fifty years after the Captivity of Israel we find ourselves brought once more to Bethel, the scene of the schismatic worship; and the prophecy, uttered some 360 years before concerning the pollution of that altar, is brought to pass. As a prophet of Judah had been commissioned to foretell it, so from Judah came its execution. Josiah, king of Judah, came there, "and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he brake down, and burned the high place, and stamped it small to powder, and burned the grove" (2 Kings xxiii. 15). Moreover, he "took the bones out of the sepulchres, and burned them upon the altar, and polluted it, according to the word of the Lord, which the man of God proclaimed."

With a brief comment we leave the Old Testament. Are we wrong in saying that we gather from this history that "the good and acceptable and perfect will of God" had been that all the tribes of His chosen people should come up to Jerusalem to worship? Jerusalem was to be the joy of the whole earth.

"Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together; whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord. . . . Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee" (Ps. cxxii. 3, 4, 6).

But man introduced division, and with division a

strange worship, "and this thing became a sin" (1 Kings xii. 30).

It would seem that to this beginning may be traced the constant idolatries of the ten tribes as compared with the kingdom of Judah, and their ultimate dispersion (1 Kings xiv. 15, 16; 2 Kings xxi. 7, 8). All across their history has God placed this record, "The sin of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin," as though it furnished the key to all that befell them.

It is a record that is repeated more than twenty times, is applied to some fifteen reigns, and ranges over 250 years.

It is a record that is applied to the kingdom of Israel alone, since that alone was guilty of schism.[1]

It is a record that proves at least this, that lapse of time does not modify God's view of a long-established sin.[2]

[1] In the solitary case of Jehoram king of Judah it is said that "he walked in the way of the kings of Israel" (2 Kings viii. 18); but we miss the well-known reference to the sin of Jeroboam.

[2] In these days, when it is urged on behalf of Dissent that the existing generation, having been born in its ranks, is not chargeable with the sin of schism, it is of importance to notice that each king of Israel as he came is condemned for the sin of Jeroboam, because "he departed not therefrom" (2 Kings iii. 3; x. 29; xiii. 2, 6; xiv. 24; xv. 18, 24, 28). In one instance, that of Zimri, who reigned but one week, during part of which he was besieged, there could scarcely have been time for anything more than a general countenance of the sin. Nevertheless it is placed on record that "he died for his sins which he sinned in doing evil in the sight of the Lord, in walking in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin which he did, to make Israel to sin" (1 Kings xvi. 18, 19).

One other conclusion may be drawn from this history. It is

"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples [*or types*]: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. x. 11, 12).[1]

ii.—*The Schismatic Worship of the Samaritans.*

In passing from the Old Testament to the New we do not at once pass from the consideration of the Jewish to that of the Christian Church. There is a period of transition, during which we can observe our Lord's attitude not only to the Jewish Church, but also to those who dissented from it. Had Scripture been silent it would have been urged, with some show of reason, that our Lord coming upon the corrupt age of that Church withdrew from it, and formed a purer Church on a new basis. Had this been the case, it would have justified secession under similar circumstances in all ages.

But our Divine Master was no dissenter from the Jewish Church. He who "entered into the synagogue on the Sabbath-day as was His custom," or "taught daily in the temple" at Jerusalem; He who

plain that any argument based on mere numbers which may be urged either now or hereafter in justification of Dissent is untenable. Christ's Church does not shift with the religious majority of the nation. It was no justification of Jeroboam's sin that it carried with it ten out of the twelve tribes, together with the coveted title of "the children of Israel."

[1] For other lessons to be drawn from the sin of Jeroboam, the reader is referred to the Appendix.

came, as every devout Jew came, to the festivals of that Church, lends no colour to such a supposition. He even was careful to enjoin respect to the authorized teachers. As a child He was found sitting at their feet, hearing them and asking them questions. To the lepers He says, "Go show yourselves unto the priests" (Luke xvii. 14); to His own disciples, "The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not" (Matt. xxiii. 2, 3). His example can never be quoted in justification of Dissent. He warns all against such a thought. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" (Matt. v. 17).

There can be no need to dwell longer on this point. It is beyond controversy that, though that Church was utterly corrupt, our Master never, by precept or example, gave any kind of justification for withdrawing from it, and setting up a separate communion. His words all point to obedience to the ordained ministers and observance of the authorized worship.

We turn, then, to that other inquiry, whether Dissent did not exist at that time, and if so, in what light did our Lord regard it?

In the centre of the Holy Land, separating Galilee from Judæa, was Samaria. Who were these Samaritans? Not Jews—nor, to speak precisely, Gentiles.[1] They were not Jews, for it is said, "The Jews have

[1] We may notice our Lord's way of particularizing them (Matt. x. 5, 6; Acts i. 8). It would seem from these instances

no dealings with the Samaritans." They were not Gentiles, for they worshipped the true God; they looked for the Messias which is called Christ; they read the Scriptures, and observed the law of Moses. They spoke of Jacob as their father (John iv. 12). It is evident, then, that they claimed to be Israelites.

If we inquire into their history, we find that they were a mixed population of Israelites, Jews, and Gentiles who had intermarried. After the captivity of the Ten Tribes, the land was peopled by colonies from Assyria. These colonists were settled, it would seem, *in the cities* (2 Kings xvii. 24), while the country districts were, in some measure, still inhabited by "the remnant of Israel"[1] (2 Chron. xxxiv. 9, 21).

that He classed them neither under the head of Jew nor Gentile, but assigned them a distinct position. Bishop Wordsworth has pointed out that had the Samaritans been Gentiles, then S. Peter and the other Apostles would have felt the same scruple as to their reception into the Church that they felt with regard to the subsequent admission of Cornelius. In the absence of any such scruple, it is plain that he, not they, was the *first fruits* of the Gentile world (Acts xi. 18). See Commentary, 2 Kings xvii. 41.

[1] "In the later conquest of Judah it is especially mentioned that the 'poorest sort of the people of the land' were left behind, and only the nobles, warriors, and artizans carried away (2 Kings xxiv. 14). It seems most probable that such had been the case with Israel also, for Josiah, in 630, puts down idolatry in 'Manasseh and Ephraim, and Simeon, even unto Naphtali,' and a little later repairs the temple with money collected for the purpose from 'Manasseh and Ephraim and all the remnant of Israel,' as well as from Judah and Benjamin (2 Chron. xxxiv. 6, 9). Again, after the ruin of Judah, in 588, worshippers from Shechem and Samaria are represented as coming with offerings

Such an Israelite element in the population, at this date, will account for the plague of lions which the Lord sent among them "because they feared not the Lord." It was in obedience to this warning that the mixed population was instructed in the worship of the true God by a captive priest liberated for that purpose (2 Kings xvii. 24, 28). Their claim to be considered Israelites would seem to have been unquestioned by the writer of the Book of Kings, for he reproaches them for not keeping God's covenant with Israel (2 Kings xvii. 34—42); while, some 50 years later, we find certain of them contributing to the restoration of the Temple in the reign of Josiah (2 Chron. xxxiv. 9). This population received from time to time during the course of seven centuries a fresh admixture of the chosen people from the neighbouring provinces of Galilee and Judæa.[1] After having offered to unite with the Jews in the rebuilding of the Temple of Jerusalem, and the offer was rejected, they displayed an ill-feeling towards them. They attempted by every means in their power to

to the temple at Jerusalem (Jer. xli. 5). In all likelihood, therefore, a considerable population of Israelites remained behind, who were recruited, after the withdrawal of the Assyrian armies, by returning fugitives. (Cf. Jer. xl. 7—12 for the similar case of Judah.)"—Nutt's "Sketch of Samaritan History, Dogma, and Literature," pp. 5, 6.

[1] Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible," *s.v.* Samaritans.

Walsham How's "Commentary," Matt. x. 5.

"Many Jews of the upper classes, discontented with their own laws and government, joined the Samaritans; Manasseh, son of the high priest, who, in violation of the Jewish law, had married a daughter of Sanballat, governor of Samaria, being among them."

hinder the work, and eventually built a rival temple on Mount Gerizim, where they sacrificed the Passover.

Now, let us not think that it was merely the Gentile element that stood in the way of their being accounted Jews. There was the same admixture in Galilee, so much so that it was called "Galilee of the Gentiles," and yet the Galilæans were accounted Jews (Matt. iv. 15). No; it was because they set up a schismatic worship. They set up temple against temple and altar against altar.

Viewed in this light we can see the point of the taunt cast in our Lord's teeth by the Jews, "Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil" (John viii. 48). It imputed to Him, not foreign extraction, but strange teaching and lawless practice.

So that in those days also there were side by side two religious communities worshipping one and the same God, and yet eyeing each other with feelings of suspicion and even enmity. The Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans. The Samaritans refused hospitality to the Jews (Luke ix. 53). Is there not, alas! some counterpart of this in the attitude of Churchmen and Dissenters towards each other at this day? And yet then, as now, a common misery could overcome religious differences. One of the ten lepers healed by the Saviour was a Samaritan (Luke xvii. 11—19). These men, thrust out from society, had come together. Must we Christians wait for such a common adversity to bring us once more together? or shall we not rather unite for the love we bear to a common Lord?

This being the religious status of the Samaritans it is all-important to ascertain how our Lord regarded them. We believe He viewed this question under two aspects. He regarded the position of the Samaritans as a *religious body*, and He held aloof from it. He gave it no countenance whatever.

It is no less plain, on the other hand, that He looked on the *individual* with kindness. He never withheld help from a Samaritan because he was a Dissenter.

Let us examine these two statements. We have already seen that the religion of the Samaritans differed in no vital particular from the religion of the Jews, except it be that they set up a separate communion.[1] If we compare the observance of religion in the two provinces, we find that the Samaritan was the more strict, or at least he claimed to be more strict, than the Jew. The essential point of divergence was the separate communion. Did our Lord treat *that* as unimportant? No; for we find that His ministry was spent in Galilee and in Judæa, and not in Samaria. We find that it was our Lord's custom to go every Sabbath-day to the synagogues of Galilee (Luke iv. 16, 44). We find that He taught daily in the Temple when at Jerusalem (Matt. xxvi. 55). But we find no record, no hint, no probability even, that He ever attended a place of worship in Samaria. And this is all the more remarkable when we bear in mind that the Samaritans had been instructed in the true worship in obedience to a warning from the Lord (2 Kings xvii. 25). Why, then, is that worship now

[1] Smith's Dictionary, *s.v.* "Samaritans."

discountenanced? What reason can we assign but that it was schismatic?

More than this, when Christ sent forth the Twelve He "commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, *and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not*, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. x. 5, 6).

There must be some reason for so definite an instruction. We might fairly say of the Samaritans, they believed the same Scriptures, they worshipped the same God, they looked for the same Messiah, why then is this marked difference made between them and the Jews? What answer can we give, except it be that inasmuch as this service (to use the words of the Article) "was not done as God willed and commanded it to be done, we doubt not but that it had the nature of sin."

So that we are forced to this conclusion—that while our Lord condemned unsparingly the *lives* of the scribes and priests, He markedly, as we have seen, acknowledged the Divine *authority* of their office. On the other hand, though He more than once spoke favourably of Samaritans, yet never once did He recognize their priesthood, or lend His authority to their Communion.[1]

[1] Place side by side these two facts: first, that of the many synagogues in Samaria built for the worship of God not one receives countenance from our Lord; and secondly, that our Lord accepts the plea urged by the elders of the Jews on behalf of a Gentile, that he was worthy for whom He should do this: for he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue (Luke vii. 4, 5). Why was the one sacrifice rejected and the other accepted?

If there still remains a doubt as to our Lord's opinion of the Samaritan communion, it is set at rest by His words to the woman of Samaria, "Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship; for salvation is of the Jews" (John iv. 22). See, Christ, when face to face with a Samaritan, took up a position. Christ distinctly claimed to be a Jew: He put forth high claims for the Jewish communion. "*We* know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews."

And the attentive reader will not fail to notice that the question at issue here is the *religious* one, not the extraction of one race against the other. The Samaritan is elsewhere styled a "stranger" [1] (Luke xvii. 18); but that point is not raised here. The question is that of *creed.* "We know what we worship; for salvation is of the Jews."

But we give but one-half the truth if we stop here. Most thankfully can we point out that if Christ loved not the *schism,* it was no bar to His love for the *schismatic.* He rebuked those who would have called down fire on the Samaritan village. He healed the Samaritan leper no less than the Jewish lepers. He

[1] This word "stranger" (ἀλλογενὴς) has been appealed to as conclusive that the Samaritans were of Gentile origin. It would seem, however, that Christ was merely adopting the phraseology of those whom he addressed, and this not as sanctioning it or the spirit in which they used it, but as adding force to His own precept, much as a painter throws in shadows to bring out lights in his picture. He said in effect, "You call the Samaritan a stranger, but it is 'this stranger' alone that has returned to give glory to God." In like manner He adopted, for the moment only, the contemptuous word "dogs," which the Jews applied to the Gentiles: "It is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it to dogs" (Matt. xv. 26).

offered great blessings to the Samaritan woman. Nor is this all. We can point out how that the Samaritan, dissenter though he was, could be a truer servant of God than the Jew himself. Our Lord tells us (Luke x.) how a man fell among thieves, who departed, leaving him half dead; and there came a priest and a Levite, who, when they saw him, passed by on the other side. It was a Samaritan who showed mercy on him; and rightly have Christians in all ages given to him the name of "the good Samaritan."[1] Again (Luke xvii. 16), our Lord healed ten lepers, but one only returned to give glory to God, "and he was a Samaritan." In both these instances the dissenter was a truer servant of God than those within the Church.

And now let us turn to that last commission given by our Lord to His disciples: "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in Judæa, *and in Samaria*, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts i. 8). There is no departure in this from the

[1] The Parable of the good Samaritan is sometimes employed to advocate inter-communion between various religious denominations. It is evident that this teaching cannot be legitimately deduced from the parable, even were it not contradicted by our Lord's attitude towards the Samaritan community. The true lesson is not that religious differences are unimportant, but that they must be no bar to the exercise of charity. The minimizing of religious differences often means the depreciation of religious truth. If the difference be so unimportant, how inexcusable the division! If the difference be vital, then to treat it as unimportant is to sacrifice the truth. It is an eloquent and true figure, and one in harmony with this parable, which represents the Faith as a statue on a pedestal, with the feet set close together in token of its fixedness, while the arms are outstretched in love to all.

attitude He before assumed to the Samaritan schism. So long as the Old Covenant was in force, so long as He was "not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel," His disciples, as faithful *Jews*, are not suffered to hold communion with dissenters from that communion. But when the veil of the Temple is rent in twain, and the Old Covenant has given place to the New, then as *Christians* they receive a commission to preach Christ to Jew and Samaritan and Gentile without distinction.

And look on: whatever they had been under the Old Covenant, the Samaritans were no dissenters from the Christian Church. "Samaria received the Word of God" (Acts viii. 14); Samaria received Christian baptism at the hands of Philip the Deacon, and "confirmation, or the laying on of hands" (Acts viii. 17) from the Apostles St. Peter and St. John. They became lively members of Christ's Church.

What, then, is the conclusion of the whole matter? If, as we cannot doubt, Dissent is wrong, yet mere Churchmanship cannot save us. There are "Israelites indeed," and Israelites merely by name and profession. There must be true personal religion, "for he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly, ... but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly" (Rom. ii. 28, 29).

Should any one ask, Is it not enough, then, to be a *good* Samaritan, a pious Dissenter? Surely we must answer that the only safe course is to keep the whole law of God, and not to offend knowingly even in one point; not merely to be a "good[1] Samaritan," but to

[1] We must not forget that the word is of human, not Scriptural authority, so that too much must not be argued from it. It is

be "an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." For nothing can do away with the fact that, by reason of their dissent, the Samaritans forfeited their share in our Lord's personal ministry; nothing can alter the declaration that He made to them—

"Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship; for salvation is of the Jews."

iii.—"*We saw one casting out devils in Thy Name, and he followeth not us*" (Mark ix. 38).

At this point it is only right that we should notice an incident in the Gospel that is often pleaded in justification of Dissent.

"*John answered Him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy Name, and he followeth not us: and we forbade him, because he followeth not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in My Name that can lightly speak evil of Me. For he that is not against us is on our part*" (Mark ix. 38—40).

The application fastened on it is to this effect. The Apostles desired to forbid one who cast out devils in Christ's Name, because he followed not them. The Church claims Apostolic authority. Even if it be granted, it follows that the Church may not forbid those who at this day preach in Christ's Name, *because they follow not her.*

In reply, we would urge that there is no sort of

the testimony of Christendom to his goodness in the case quoted.

ground for identifying this man's position with that of modern Dissent.

1. The man was not simply a preacher who felt an impulse to preach; he was *casting out devils in Christ's Name.* He was working miracles—our Lord says so. He carried with him his credentials that our Lord recognized him, because the vagabond Jews who used that Name *for the same purpose* were discomfited (Acts xix. 13—16).

It is not said that he went out on his own authority. It is not said he withdrew from the fellowship of the Apostles, and then withstood them. There is not a word to suggest that he, or such as he, after our Lord's ascension, maintained a separate communion. On the contrary, we only hear this of the early Christians, "They continued stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine *and fellowship*" (Acts ii. 42).

Place side by side with this the case of a Dissenting chapel set up in a parish, bidding against the Church for adherents, teaching against her doctrines, undermining her position, and too often hindering her work. Can such a case stand the test by which our Lord tried this man's work, "He that is *not against us* is on our part"?

2. We go further; we say that there *could* be no Dissent at the time that this incident occurred, because as yet there was no Church. After His resurrection our Lord gave His commission to His disciples, "As My Father hath sent Me, so send I you" (John xx. 21—23). Before that, all His sayings respecting His Church had reference to the future—"upon this rock I *will* build My Church" (Matt. xvi. 18).

It comes, then, to this: when once that Church is commissioned, how did the Apostles interpret this injunction of the Lord, "Forbid him not"?

There were certain Christians in Corinth who followed not the Apostles. Some sheltered themselves under that sacred Name, saying, "We are of Christ." What then? Did St. Paul "forbid them not"? On the contrary, listen to these earnest words, "I beseech you, brethren, by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. i. 10).

3. What, then, was our Lord's intention in saying "Forbid him not"? Was it not to repress the spirit of *self*-assertion in the Apostles—a spirit that broke out on other occasions (Matt. xx. 21; Luke xxii. 24). Observe, they say, "he followeth not *us*." And yet the man may well have had Christ's own commission. He may have been one of those who were called, though we afterwards lose sight of them (Luke ix. 60, 61): or, it may be, one of the Seventy. Or was he one of the disciples of the Baptist, who himself preached Christ? (John i. 29). These were gradually to be brought into the Church, as in the case of the twelve disciples at Ephesus (Acts xix. 3), and of Apollos, whom, knowing only John's baptism, Aquila and Priscilla took and "expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly" (Acts xviii. 26). If the man was one of these, that is, one struggling towards more perfect light, and not a *separatist*, we can well understand the command, "Forbid him not."

Till it can be proved that this man, or such as he, held a commission from Christ to act independently of His Church—and there is no trace of this either then or afterwards, but much evidence to the contrary—his case cannot be pleaded in justification of Dissent.

We must take the verdict of Scripture on such a question, not by detaching a single passage that seems to favour one view, but as it is "generally set forth" (Art. xvii.). It is a sound rule of the Church never to expound one place of Scripture so that it be repugnant to another (Art. xx.); and to interpret the passage in question as authorizing, to say the least, religious independence, would make it repugnant to all those many others which declare for religious unity.

iv.—*Our Lord's Prayer for Unity* (John xvii. 20—23).

In proceeding to consider, as the next step in this inquiry, what is the declared will of God and the mind of Christ on the unity of His Church, we should be careful to carry with us the conclusions we have already arrived at. To do this is to do no more than treat the Bible as a consecutive revelation of the Divine Will. Is it not dishonouring to the Holy Spirit to treat that Book as we would treat no other book—to take texts often indiscriminately, without reference to their immediate context, without other texts bearing on the subject, to take these again out of the order in which God has placed them, just as if there was no connection whatever between one portion of the Scriptures and another? Surely there is a *struc-*

ture in that Book, giving a gradual development of the will of God.

Every institution, then, under the Old Testament has some counterpart in the New, and so throws light upon it. We cannot shut out Circumcision in considering Baptism; the Passover cannot be dissociated from the Supper of the Lord; the observance of the Sabbath must guide us in forming our idea of the observance of the Lord's Day. God does not change. Nothing in His revelation is really changed. "I know," says Solomon, "that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever" (Eccles. iii. 14). What we too often call change is only fulfilment. Christ came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it. In contemplating, then, Dissent from the Christian Church, we must not lose sight of what we have seen was the mind of God as regards Dissent from the Jewish Church.

But let us first set at rest the question whether Christ contemplated His Church being one, in the same sense that the Jewish Church was one. In other words, was it a *visible* unity, or, as it is sometimes urged, only a spiritual unity among true believers?

The answer to this question will necessarily hinge upon the well-known prayer of our Lord in that wonderful seventeenth chapter of St. John, where we are suffered to behold Him in inner communion with His Father. The ground is holy ground, and we naturally shrink from discussion on such matters. Let us approach in all reverence and godly fear.

"*Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and*

I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me" (John xvii. 20—23).

Two or three things stand out upon the face of this prayer.

It was a prayer for all time—a prayer for us and for our children, and to all that are afar off, as many as the Lord our God shall call (Acts ii. 39).

It was a desire very near to the Saviour's heart. Mark the recurrence of the petition, "*that they all may be one; that they may be one in Us; that they may be one, even as We are one; that they may be made perfect in one.*"

If it be asked if it was *merely* visible unity that our Lord prayed for, we answer, assuredly not. Such a prayer condemns all divisions *within* the Church, all such dispositions as St. Paul speaks of under the terms of "variance, strife, heresy" (Gal. v. 20).

How close, how loving, how holy is the unity contemplated by our Lord's prayer, who shall say? Our highest conception must fall immeasurably short of the reality, "*as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee.*" It is the union of Holy Father and Holy Son, of God with God. What Christian, be he Churchman or Dissenter, is guiltless in this matter? Who is there that has not hindered the fulfilment of his Lord's prayer?

With a deep sense, then, of our own shortcomings, we ask our Nonconformist brethren to consider their own position. If visible union cannot hope to satisfy the requirements of that prayer, what shall we say of *visible and avowed disunion?* What part or lot can this have in such a matter? Will any one venture to say that, judged by this test, the existence of more than a hundred sects in this country can be justified?

But it is not left doubtful whether our Lord contemplated a visible unity among the members of His Church, for the words, "that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me" plainly indicate that it was to be something not alone visible to God, to Whom all hearts are open, but visible also *to the world.* Whatever more it may be, and it is much more, it must at least be a unity that is visible.

If it be still maintained that this prayer will be satisfied by the union that, in spite of distinctions of creed, exists amongst all that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth, let us bring it to a practical test. Let it be assumed that there are two such sanctified souls, the one an Independent and the other a Wesleyan. Let it be conceived that they would meet together to hold sweet converse concerning their common Lord, to read His Holy Word, to join in prayer. And let there be a third suffered to be present, an inquirer after God, but not yet led to the knowledge of the truth. We can well imagine that he would be deeply impressed by the earnest faith of his two friends, he would say from his heart, "O that I knew where *I* could find Him!" Seeing soul thus knit to soul, he would say with truth what

was said of old, "How these Christians love one another!" But then picture the shock to that man's yearnings when on the Lord's Day he sees his two friends separate to go to their respective chapels. "What!" he would say, "cannot even *you* kneel side by side on this day of all others, your Lord's Day? Cannot *you* walk in the house of God as friends? Cannot *you* partake together of your Lord's Supper, that ordinance of union? *You* who so trust to meet in the worship of heaven, cannot you meet in the worship of earth? Is there, then, so much doubt about the things of God that even *you* two cannot agree together? What hope can there be for *me?*" And so this thy brother stumbleth, is offended, is made weak, it may be, is destroyed (Rom. xiv. 21). And woe to him by whom the offence cometh! O Lord, was it for this that Thou didst pray when Thou saidst, "That they all may be one, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me"?

Assuredly the thought in our Saviour's mind was that there should be an *outward* unity amongst His disciples, even as there was at the beginning, when "all that believed *were together*" (Acts ii. 44); and that this outward unity should be accompanied by an *inward*, as it was when "the multitude of them that believed were *of one heart and of one soul*" (Acts iv. 32). Without this inward agreement there could be no lasting outward unity, for "can two walk together except they be agreed?"

So, it would seem, were our Lord's words interpreted, for *steadfast continuance in the Apostles' fellowship* is one of the four recorded characteristics of the

first Christians after the Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Ghost. Could *that* be otherwise than binding which is classed with such duties as adherence to Apostolic doctrine, the participation in the Holy Communion, and Common Prayer? (Acts ii. 42).

It was this spectacle of perfect union that was to be so impressive to the world. While all around were misgivings, unsatisfied longings, and great searchings of hearts even to "distress of nations with perplexity," there in Christ's Church should be perfect peace. The members were to be one, as Christ and His Father were one.

But the dream fades away. The Church is still there, for she has her Lord's promise that the gates of hell shall not prevail against her. She is there, but

> "With a scornful wonder,
> Men see her sore opprest,
> By schisms rent asunder,
> By heresies distrest."

What wonder that perplexed and unstable souls are lost—souls that might otherwise have been won for Christ? And if those who wish to *believe* are offended, what shall we say of those who wish to *disbelieve*, who "love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil"? Are they not strengthened in their unbelief by all this division among Christians? Where was the weapon forged of which the writer himself has felt the edge, when a sceptic repelled him with the sneer, "When Christians can agree amongst themselves, then come and talk to me"?

Nor is this stumbling-block alone to be met with in our own land. This is the testimony of the mis-

sionary to the heathen. "When I asked," says Bishop Selwyn, "one of the most remarkable of the New Zealand chieftains why he refused to be a Christian, he stretched out three fingers, and, pointing to the centre joint, said, 'I have come to a point from which I see three roads branching. This is the Church of England, this the Church of Rome, and this the Wesleyans. I am sitting down here doubting which to take.' And" (adds the Bishop) "he sat doubting at that 'cross road' until he died." (*Speech at the Wolverhampton Church Congress.*)

As we look at all this, we can understand the yearning that at this time is awakening in earnest hearts throughout Christendom, that God will hasten the time when "Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim" (Isa. xi. 13). We can understand the prayers that in all quarters of the globe are going up for the unity of Christ's Church. "O pray for the peace of Jerusalem! they shall prosper that love thee."

There are those that read their Bibles prayerfully, to whom that Bible seems to set the broad stamp of unity all across Christianity. There is the unity of the Godhead. There is the union that Jesus Christ came to restore between God and man. There is one fold under one Shepherd. It is by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body—His Church (1 Cor. xii. 13). When we unite in the Holy Communion of His Body and Blood we are assured that "we, being many, are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread" (1 Cor. x. 17). And then like the ascending scale of a grand chorus rise those words of

St. Paul, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph. iv. 4—6). It comes from the Church like a mighty echo to that prayer that her Lord prayed on the night of His betrayal, "That they all may be one: as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they may be one in Us; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me."

My brother, have you ever known this longing of your Lord? Have you ever prayed His prayer? Will you pray it now?

v.—*Our Lord's Coat without Seam* (John xix. 23).

There is one figure which the old writers delighted to use as symbolical of the Unity of the Church, and that was our Saviour's coat "without seam, woven from the top throughout" (John xix. 23). We shall, I think, on reflection, be slow to reject the idea as merely fanciful.

Keeping first of all in view that no word of Scripture is without its teaching for us, we may recall the inner meaning which in God's Word had already been attached to the garments of the body. There was the mantle of Elijah that fell upon Elisha, God signifying thereby His servant's succession to the office and work of a prophet. There was the rending of Samuel's mantle, figuring the rending from Saul of the kingdom of Israel (1 Sam. xv. 27, 28). Very striking too is the story of the garment which was

rent by Ahijah the prophet into twelve pieces, of which he gave ten to Jeroboam, signifying thereby the division of the kingdom (1 Kings xi. 29, 30). By the light of this contrast we read the record that our Saviour's coat was "*without seam, woven from the top throughout,*" implying thereby that in His kingdom division should have no place.

It must not be forgotten that our Lord's Kingdom was, so to speak, the *key note* of the Crucifixion. On this charge He was condemned by Pilate (John xviii. 33—40). This suggested the mockery of the Roman soldiers (xix. 3). This was the taunt of the chief priests (Matt. xxvii. 42). This too was the substance of the superscription on the Cross (Matt. xxvii. 39). This the prayer of the repentant thief, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom" (Luke xxiii. 42). Does not the same reference attach to this mention of the seamless coat? That there was no recognition of this truth on the part of the soldiers is no obstacle to its reception. They were unknowingly fulfilling Scripture when they forbore to break His legs (John xix. 33). They were unconsciously interpreting the same Divine Will when they refused to rend His coat.

We may further point out that this principle of assigning a hidden meaning to our Lord's vesture seems to be borne out by another instance. When St. Peter went into the empty sepulchre, "he seeth the linen clothes lie; and the napkin that was about His head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself" (John xx. 6, 7). Is there not allegorical teaching in this minute de-

scription of the grave-clothes? St. Paul says of our Lord, "He is the *head of the body*, the Church" (Col. i. 18). When Christ arose from the grave the work of the *head* was done, so the napkin that was about the head is wrapped together in a place by itself. But the grave-clothes of His body, the Church, must not yet be put away. It must still suffer awhile, but it has a confidence so eloquently expressed by the folded napkin, that "Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him" (Rom. vi. 9).

If, then, the grave-clothes that were about the body seem to convey this meaning, may we not, without straining Holy Scripture, believe with the old writers, that the coat that was also about the body has its spiritual significance? That body, as we have seen, is the figure for His Church. His coat would represent the organization of His Church, and this was "without seam, woven from the top throughout." God grant that by no act of ours it may be rent!

vi.—*The Schisms in the Corinthian Church.*

We are now arrived at the last stage of our inquiry as to the verdict of Holy Scripture on this question of religious separation.

We have seen that the mind that was in Christ Jesus was that there should be one fold under one Shepherd. We have listened to that wonderful prayer for the unity of His Church. It only remains for us to notice those first beginnings of schism which the Scriptures record.

That branch of the Catholic or *Universal* Church which had been planted at Corinth, furnishes us with such an instance.

Let us give St. Paul's own words.

"*Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.*

"*For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the household of Chloe, that there are contentions* (schisms) *among you.*

"*Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.*

"*Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?*" (1 Cor. i. 10—13; xi. 18).

There can be no disputing that these are words of earnest expostulation and reproval. St. Paul would evidently arrest the evil in its earliest stage.

But it has been objected that inasmuch as the divisions here spoken of are schisms *in* a Church and not *from* it, therefore the Apostle's words cannot be applied to Dissent in these days. But will it be seriously maintained that it was open to these parties, who called themselves after Paul, and Apollos, and Cephas, and even Christ, to withdraw *from* the Church of Corinth, but that so long as they remained *in* it they were not to disturb its peace? Is it really open to Dissenters to use this Scripture to inculcate unity within their own body, but to deny that it can have

any bearing on their own secession from the Church of England? Will it be maintained that St. Paul, while he condemned the spirit that was tending to separation, would not have condemned the separation itself? If so, it comes to this, that the spirit was wrong, but its outcome was not wrong; in other words, a corrupt tree can bring forth good fruit! (Matt. vii. 18).

We therefore dismiss the objection and turn to the consideration of these Corinthian divisions. St. Paul in his letter, insists upon these two points:—

1. *That Schism is an injury to the Lord Jesus Christ.*
2. *That it is perilous to those who make divisions.*

1. Let us observe the ground on which St. Paul appeals to these schismatics. "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?"

If we take the two latter clauses, he would appear to resent on his Lord's behalf that any human name should be brought into prominence. What had Paul done to merit this? It was Christ, not Paul, who had paid the penalty for their sins; and their putting forward of the servant's name was an encroachment on the Master's glory. "Who, then, is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase" (1 Cor. iii. 5—7). Surely this is an unmistakable warning against bringing the name of any human teacher

into prominence, be it Luther, or Calvin, or Wesley, or Irving. And even those schismatics who shelter themselves under the name of Christ do not escape the condemnation. If there be the *spirit* of schism, it can be of no avail to urge the plea, "and I of Christ."

But we have omitted to dwell on what is after all St. Paul's main argument, "Is Christ divided?" These words evidently imply that in some sense these schisms in the Corinthian Church would seem to *divide Christ.* Let us examine their meaning.

It was a very real side of a man's religion in those days, as in these, that he should, to use St. Paul's expression, *win Christ* (Phil. iii. 8). Who would wish to detract by one word from the necessity of acquiring this personal interest in the Saviour? At the same time it is a truth that must be balanced by that other truth—that if Christ is ours, "*we are Christ's*" (1 Cor. iii. 23). We are not our own, we are bought with a price. This is a truth that lays obligations upon us. We must seek not our own will, but God's, not our own glory, but Christ's (Phil. ii. 21). Cannot we understand that it must take from the glory of a king that his kingdom should be divided, "for every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation"? (Matt. xii. 25). Such a king will receive no honour of men. And this is the effect on the minds of men when they behold the divisions in Christ's kingdom upon earth. He is put to an open shame. Our Lord was not content to be the Shepherd of many folds; He would have "one fold under one Shepherd." Whence then these many folds? Whence these many

Christian sects, some calling themselves after the names of human leaders, all acknowledging human founders? Is it not an encroachment on the glory of Christ, Who should be all in all? Remember His own words: "Neither be ye called masters, for One is your Master, even Christ" (Matt. xxiii. 10). The very saints in heaven cast down their golden crowns before Him, for *His* is the kingdom and the power and the glory for ever and ever.

But let us take St. Paul's own inspired figure in this Epistle for Christ's Church. "As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; *so also is Christ*" (1 Cor. xii. 12).

Christ therefore is identified with His Church under this figure of the body. And St. Paul continues, "there should be no schism in the body" (1 Cor. xii. 25); and seeing schisms in that body he might well exclaim, "Is Christ divided?" His argument is this, that schism is not merely an injury to the community of Christians called the Church, the injury is to Christ Himself. He allows these schismatic Corinthians no escape from this conclusion; he pointedly presses it home to them: "Now *ye* are the body of Christ, and members in particular."

And let us not forget who it is that is insisting on the mystical union betwixt Christ and His Church. It is the same man who confesses that at one time he "beyond measure persecuted the Church of God," and heard that Voice from heaven, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou *Me?* . . . I am Jesus Whom thou persecutest." From this source he first learned the truth

which he now urges on the Corinthians, that to divide the Church is to divide Christ.

We would put it therefore to all who love their Lord, whether it can be His will that those who in God's Word are called His Body should be thus divided. No; the dishonour, the injury is to *Him*. *His* is the slighted desire and the hindered prayer. *His* is the Name dishonoured and the divided kingdom. Let it ring in the ears of all who profess to love Him while they divide His body, "*Is Christ divided?*" Vainly will they plead their love, for He will answer, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments" (John xiv. 15).

She was no true mother who before the judgment-seat of Solomon was willing that the child should be divided (1 Kings iii. 26). And a greater than Solomon is here. Can that be a true servant who scruples not to divide Christ?[1]

2. But apart from the injury done to our Lord, schism has another side to it. *It is perilous to those who separate.*

Let us once more give the Apostle's words.

"*Ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?*" (1 Cor. iii. 3, 4).

[1] It should be added that there is another interpretation of the passage, which would render it, "Has Christ become the property of one part only?" *i.e.*, the majesty of Christ is set against so unworthy an insinuation (Alford). In any case the result is the same; a division amongst Christians is an injury to the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is no mistaking the import of such words as these. And while we gladly acknowledge the personal holiness and spirituality of numbers who are living in separation from Christ's Church, yet in so far as that separation was begun or is *consciously* maintained by them, so far must we apply to them the Apostle's words, "Ye are yet carnal." It is an element, and God alone knows how great an element, of peril in lives that may be otherwise full of holy zeal; for if that element spread, as God knoweth it *may*, till it leaven the whole lump, what will it be in the end thereof? Let St. Paul answer: "To be *carnally minded* is death" (Rom. viii. 6).

This is no strained application of an isolated text; for St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Galatians, ranks among the works of the *flesh*, "variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions,[1] heresies" (Gal. v. 20). And St. James confirms it, saying "Where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work" (Jas. iii. 16). Hear also what St. Jude saith, "These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit" (Jude 19).

[1] "Seditions," an inadequate rendering of the Greek word (διχοστασίαι) used by St. Paul. Literally, in the singular, it is "standing apart." It denotes the attitude of mind in which the feeling of dissent is habitually in the ascendant—the centrifugal force rather than the centripetal. In religion, it is plain that such a disposition, however upright in other respects, is directly opposed to the realization of our Lord's conception of "one Body," one Church. As such, St. Paul classes it among the works of the *flesh*. Let us therefore strive to hold the faith, not only in righteousness of life, but in the unity of the Spirit and in the bond of peace.

We have dealt with the single instance of the Church of Corinth. It would be easy to show that the warning uttered against the sin of schism that prevailed there finds an echo more or less distinct in the Epistles to the other Churches. In this there is a cumulative weight of testimony. But one clear expression of the will of God is sufficient for all who are willing to be led by His Spirit.

My brother, your Lord and mine has declared for union amongst His followers. Will you still live in separation from His Church?

While it was still a sin of ignorance, we may well believe that there was One to pray for you Who prayed of old, "Father, forgive them, for *they know not* what they do."

But can you *now* plead ignorance of His will? Must it not henceforth be a deliberate act of disobedience? "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (Jas. iv. 17). And remember, "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (Jas. ii. 10). God suffers no reservation of one point, no keeping back of part of the price; no amount of zeal and devotion will compensate for one *allowed* sin. If there be this in the background, it will not avail to make profession of our faith, for the answer is ready, "Why call ye Me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke vi. 46). And again, "Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven" (Matt. vii. 21). Even of the least of God's

commandments (and is this one of the least?) it is declared, "Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. v. 19).

In conclusion, I appeal to you by the Name that is above every name, a Name dear to you. If that fails, nothing can avail.

"I beseech you *by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ*, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment."

PART II.

OBJECTIONS COMMONLY URGED AGAINST THE CHURCH, ANSWERED.

i.—*It is itself a schismatic Church because it separated from the Church of Rome at the Reformation.*

IF this charge could be brought home to the Church of England, then would her mouth indeed be shut on this matter of schism.

But what is the fact? Simply this, *that it is historically untrue.* If any fact can be proved to demonstration, it is that the Church of England had an independent existence for more than 1000 years prior to the Reformation; consequently, if that independence was her right, it was no schism to assert it.

If the fact that a Roman missionary, St. Augustine, came to our shores in A.D. 596 be made the basis of a claim that the Church of England was but a dependency of the Church of Rome, it can be met by counter facts, that he found there a British archbishop and seven bishops; that British bishops are mentioned as being present at the Council of Arles in 314; while the martyrdom of St. Alban is said to have taken place as early as 305.

But further, the claim is negatived by the very title of "the Reformed Church of England." Reformation implies a previous existence. If we point to another and say, "There goes a reformed man," we mean that there was a time when he had fallen into evil courses, but that a *reformation* had set in, and he had returned to a better mind. He is not another man because he is a reformed man. It is just so with the Church of England. She had felt, as so many other Churches had felt, the paramount influence of the Church of Rome, and had been led into grievous error. All this had grown upon her by degrees: and though there had been distinct assertions of her independence from the time of the Conqueror, still it was not till that period of the national history known as the Reformation that by a convulsive effort she finally shook herself free from that influence and the errors it entailed. Thus, though she had known corruption, and had known purification, she was the same Church. The Reformers themselves would have been the first to repudiate that theirs was a new Church.

The imputation, therefore, that there was no Church of England till it seceded from the Church of Rome at the Reformation is simply idle and without foundation. The old Romish taunt, "Where was your Church before Luther?" was met by the homely retort, "Where was your face before it was washed?"

But we are reluctant to dismiss this question thus summarily. It is very essential to understand what was the true nature of the Reformation.

There were at least two main elements in it—the *political* and the *religious*. The claims put forward

by the Pope of Rome were aimed at the temporal as well as the spiritual power. Taxes were levied, nation set on to make war upon nation. Even kings had been deposed in obedience to his mandate. Against such foreign usurpation the State arose and asserted the national independence. Simultaneous with this, and allied with it, was the effort made by the National Church. She claimed her right to reform the faith which had become corrupt, and while she retained all that was pure and Scriptural and primitive, to remove all that was corrupt, unscriptural, and of recent growth. So the Reformation was essentially a national movement. Parliament represented the State, Convocation the clergy. As English citizens, we demanded the restoration of our liberties; as English Churchmen, the reformation of our faith.

Out of that struggle, often renewed, the Church finally emerged, bearing the impress of three main characteristics. She was, (1) National, (2) Protestant, (3) Catholic.

(1) The immediate result of the Reformation was the assertion of the primitive principle of the independence of national Churches against the claim of Rome to the supremacy of Christendom. It was a principle both reasonable and Scriptural.

There were certain things which were unalterable; such were the great verities of the Christian faith "once (*lit., once for all*) delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). These the Catholic Church had embodied in the Creeds. With these it was open to none to tamper; they were the common heritage, the common trust of the whole Church of Christ in every age.

All this, as a sacred deposit, the Church of England accepted thankfully and without questioning.

But there were other matters,—of internal government, for instance,—where she had an undoubted claim to independence. There was nothing in Scripture to justify the spiritual sovereignty claimed by the Bishop of Rome ; there was much to render it untenable. If St. Peter was foremost in speech and action of the apostles, he also fell the lowest. If at times he was called into special prominence, it was rather a *priority* of order than a *superiority* of position. He acted as the representative of the rest, much as the foreman of a jury is spokesman, and no more, for his fellow-jurors. No supremacy appears to have been exercised by him over the Church, none to have been claimed. It was St. James, not St. Peter, who pronounced the decision of the Council of Jerusalem (Acts xv. 13). It is St. Paul who was pre-eminently the Apostle to the Gentiles, and claimed to be not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles, and on one occasion withstood St. Peter to the face because he was to be blamed (2 Cor. xi. 5 ; Gal. ii. 11). It is useless to pursue the question further, to inquire whether he was ever Bishop of Rome, whether the exceptional powers claimed for him could be transmitted to his successors in that See, whether the gradual development of these pretensions cannot be traced to the encroachments, too often unscrupulous, of a succession of ambitious Popes.

To view the question practically, it was neither reasonable nor tolerable that the bishop of a distant Church should lord it over God's heritage in this land, claiming to have a voice in the appointment to spiri-

tual offices in England, appropriating Church revenues, and dictating rites and ceremonies, adapted, it may be, to a warm southern nature, but out of place here. Each National Church has independent authority in all such questions, which vary "according to the diversities of countries, times, and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's Word" (Art. xxxiv.).

The assertion of an independence so limited is compatible with visible unity among all the branches of the Holy Catholic Church. Even between diocese and diocese and parish and parish there must be some independence compatible with a vital unity. Thus between National Churches there can be not only "one faith" common to all, but inter-communion and co-operation; so that a member of one on removing to another could at once, and of right, take his place in it. Differences of creed would be submitted to a general council of the whole Church, at which the several National Churches would be represented, and the decision would be binding upon all. This is wholly distinct from a so-called "Evangelical Alliance," where avowed differences of creed render *unity* impossible, and narrow the limits of co-operation. Alliance is based on expediency, and can be dissolved at any time. Unity is based on a law natural and divine, and any disruption of it threatens the very life of the body. May God put it into all His servants' hearts to pray for, and, as far as in them lies, to promote the restoration of a world-wide unity!

But we must guard against the perversion of this claim for the independence of National Churches.

There is no principle so good but it is liable to abuse; and when it is asserted under circumstances of great trial and excitement, it is too often pushed to undue lengths.

And this we find to have been the case with the principle under discussion. When every little gathering of Christians claims a like independence, the result is national disunion and even discord. *Politically*, of course, this liberty of action is open to all. Christianity uses no compulsion. But the appeal in these pages is to Scripture. The question raised is not the *civil right*, but the *religious duty*. On this issue we hesitate not to say that religious *cliques* and small followings, isolating themselves from their brethren, find no place in the Scriptural conception of Christ's Church. The whole stream of testimony sets strongly in the other direction—"one fold under one shepherd," "one Catholic and Apostolic Church."

But then a world-wide Church was manifestly incapable of central government in matters of detail. In apostolic times no provision seems to have been made for it. Nor, indeed, would universal legislation be feasible, for what would be suitable for one nationality would be ill adapted to another. *Unity of faith* there could be, but not *uniformity of organization*. What, then, should be the unit of independence? Surely the nation. The national existence has grown out of the conditions of physical geography, a common language, a common history, a common interest. A natural aptitude for self-government has been developed. These conditions are also the conditions of religious comprehension. It is the widest sphere pos-

sible, and as such, Christianity, which aims at catholicity, assumes it as the unit of independence in such matters.

And such we find to have been the case in the Church of the Apostles. Churches which in their earliest stage met in upper rooms and in private houses expanded at a later date into National Churches. Only those whose interest it is to do so will seize on what was manifestly a *stage of transition* and desire to stereotype it. The *congregation* was independent and self-governing only so long as it was the *sole* representative of Christ's Church in a city, but when Christianity overspread the whole city and the surrounding country, then the independence of the congregation was merged in the national religious life. It had been independent, not because it was a congregation, but because it was the germ of a National Church. Let a single instance in Scripture be adduced of two Christian congregations in one city claiming independence of each other, and of a superior authority, and such independence approved, and Congregationalism will then have some Scriptural ground. Till then we can only regard it as the *perversion* of a Scriptural principle, the independence of National Churches. This, as we have seen, is very far removed from a system which contemplates numberless little independent circles of Christians, whose sole point of agreement is that they shall be free to disagree in faith and in discipline.

The Epistles of St. Paul lend no support to the Congregational system—his later ones distinctly negative it. Timothy, as Bishop of Ephesus, has many presby-

ters and deacons under him. Titus is Bishop of Crete, an island famed of old for its hundred cities. We have said enough to show that Christianity seeks not the smallest but the widest area of comprehension for its unit of independence. That unit is the National Church. We extol the national feeling in the individual called patriotism as the noblest of virtues. Christianize the nation, and there should be a corresponding love for the National Church. We condemn as factious those who seek only the interest of their class against the interest of the nation. Just as unnatural is schism from the National Church. A house divided against itself, a disunited family, shocks our sense of right; but how good and joyful a thing it is to see men of one mind in a house, a city at unity in itself!

(2) *The Church of England is Protestant.*

This raises a new issue. It is an assertion not so much of the liberties of the Church, as of the purity of her faith.

The Church of England *protested* against the errors of Rome; and so long as those errors are maintained, so long must her attitude towards Rome be *Protestant.*

It is a title that awakens very mixed feelings. First of all it recalls a glorious page in the history of the past; it recalls that protracted struggle of our Church, out of which, by the mercy of God, our faith came forth purified and reformed. From this point of view we can only look back on the Reformation with a deep sense of thankfulness to Almighty God. The reformed faith was sealed with the blood of martyrs, and we echo from our hearts those words which were

uttered by Bishop Latimer from the stake at Oxford: "Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man; we shall this day light such a candle by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out" (*Blunt on the Reformation*, p. 292).

But it is also a word full of sorrow to every thoughtful heart. It means that there is grievous active error abroad in the world for one branch of Christ's Church to have found it necessary to adopt this attitude of protest against another for more than three centuries. It means that from one who should have been our own familiar friend we have received bitter denunciation. It was not an open enemy who did us this dishonour, but one with whom we should have walked in the house of God as friends. There should be no feeling in our hearts but genuine sorrow, such as the Psalmist felt when he said "rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not Thy law" (Ps. cxix. 136). And who shall say how greatly the cause of Christianity has suffered from the action of the Church of Rome? May God hasten the time when, by removing the error, it shall be safe to lay aside the title! With uncharitableness and bitterness towards Roman Catholics we can have no sympathy. Neither God's Word nor Christ's example afford any warrant for this. Rather "speak gently of our sister's fall" (*Christian Year*). Rather pray that all who profess and call themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth.

But, as we have already pointed out, even right movements are apt to overshoot themselves when undertaken in periods of great trial and excitement.

There will always be a certain number in every community who are subject to panic, and consequently inclined to revolution rather than reformation. So we find in this task which the Church of England set herself of reforming her faith. A party, prominent at a later date as the Puritans, in their zeal to part with all that was Roman, would have relinquished not a little that was Christian. By God's overruling Providence this was frustrated. Calmer and wiser counsels prevailed. To adopt a familiar figure, men saw that in straightening a crooked stick there was a danger of its becoming bent in the other direction. It was this very moderation that insured the permanence of the Reformation. Had one form of error merely taken the place of another, then the reaction which was sure to follow would have riveted once more on this nation the chains it had cast off. But the prayers of the faithful were heard at this crisis, and the peril was avoided.

The condition of the Church's faith previous to the Reformation may be likened to that of a material church which has fallen into decay. Some there would be to advocate pulling down and rebuilding from the ground; others, better advised, would perceive how much of the original structure survived, and was worthy of preservation. The delicate tracery of a window, the graceful outline of an arch, and the symmetrical proportions of the whole, though broken and obscured, are instinct with the original design of the architect. These can be retained, or where deficient restored; but pull the fabric down and attempt to rebuild it, and though doubtless a resemblance may be produced,

it will be the work of another hand, and bear the impress of another mind.

So the Reformers reasoned. There were many corruptions that had, so to speak, been fastened on the fabric of the faith. These were condemned as departures from the original plan. But on this account to lay violent hands on the whole, and "to break down the carved work with axes and hammers" (Ps. lxxiv. 6), seemed to them to be nothing less than sacrilege. There was much that bore the mind of the Great Master-builder Himself, and was sacred in their eyes. Therefore, reverently and prayerfully, they applied themselves to the work of Restoration. They settled it with themselves that theirs should be a reformed, not a new faith.

And the principles of reformation on which they proceeded were these: first, that the whole should be brought to the test of God's written Word; where that was plainly against such Romish doctrines as Purgatory, the sale of indulgences for sin, Works of Supererogation, and the like, there could be no appeal, they were absolutely and finally condemned. But there were many other points of doctrine raised, where the question at issue was more intricate. Scripture was pitted against Scripture, interpretation opposed to interpretation. The Reformers themselves were at issue: such, for example, were the doctrines of the Sacraments, of Ordination, of Predestination and Election. The lines where truth ended and error began were very hard to define. What was the course they pursued? They sought the verdict of the primitive Church; they searched the writings of those who

lived nearest to the times of the Apostles, and who, in a few instances, were their disciples. They argued that these men would be more likely to have inherited their teaching or imbibed their spirit. To see how they interpreted Scripture on such questions could not fail to throw light on them.

It is precisely in this way that men investigate the architecture of an ancient building. They are not content to look only on the superstructure, for it is admitted on all hands that subsequent additions can throw no light on the question. They take the building near the level of the ground, where the first courses of stone laid upon the foundations come into sight. These cannot mislead, and so from the character of these they argue as to what should be the character of the rest. It is the same with the spiritual fabric. Those lively stones that were first laid upon the foundations of the apostles and prophets, gave valuable testimony as to the true nature of the spiritual house which was in process of restoration.

And this principle was not only reasonable, it was Scriptural. Scripture was the rule of faith; but the Church was the Divinely appointed keeper and witness of Holy Writ (Art. xx.). To her were committed the oracles of God. More than this, the Universal Church of Christ had the promise of the Lord's abiding presence, of the guidance of the Holy Spirit of Truth, and that the gates of hell should not prevail against it (Matt. xxviii. 20; John xvi. 13; Matt. xvi. 18). On these promises she had relied in summoning the first Council of Jerusalem to pronounce upon the difficult question of circumcision (Acts xv.). And in promul-

gating the decision of the Church, strong but not unwarrantable words had been used, "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us" (Acts xv. 28). "The Spirit and the Bride" had spoken in unison (Rev. xxii. 17). In her, therefore, the Reformers beheld powers they could not venture to claim for themselves. She was "the pillar and ground of the Truth" (1 Tim. iii. 15), and where Scripture was open to conflicting interpretations, they adopted that which Christ's Church had received.[1]

It was not this or that National Church which could lay exclusive claim to such promises. Many such Churches had erred, not a few had perished. The promises, therefore, were the heritage of the Catholic or Universal Church of Christ. The Church of Ephesus could leave her first love; the Church of Pergamos could be tainted with the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes; the rest of the Seven Churches could be condemned on various accounts, but the promise of Christ's presence was not contingent on their merits. It could not fail, because *He* is faithful that promised. So St. John "saw seven golden candlesticks (*the Seven Churches*), and in the midst of the seven candlesticks One like unto the Son of Man" (Rev. i. 12, 13).

It was therefore to this undivided Catholic Church, such as we behold it during the first three centuries after Christ, that the Reformers appealed.

To this source may be traced the substitution of the observance of the Lord's day for the Sabbath, the first day of the week for the seventh, the doctrine of

[1] "To understand the Holy Scriptures aright is to understand them as the primitive Church did" (Bishop Wilson).

Infant Baptism, and of the mystery of the Holy Trinity; all of which, though not expressly laid down in Holy Scripture, are agreeable to it.

And this brings us to the third characteristic.

(3) *The Church of England is Catholic.*[1]

That is, truly Catholic in the faith she professes, as well as historically and organically a branch of the Holy Catholic Church.

Never for one moment has she forfeited her claim to that title, never has she withdrawn it. She puts it into the mouth of all her children. "I believe in one Catholic and Apostolic Church."

As a living branch of that Church she claims participation in the promises made to it. As a living branch of that Church she escapes the condemnation of those who live in schism from it.[2] As a living

[1] Catholic signifies "throughout the whole world," *i.e.*, universal.

[2] We can never insist too strongly or too often on the fact that the Church of England is guiltless of *schism* as regards the Church of Rome. Her attitude was one of calm *protest* against error, and not of secession.

Archbishop Cranmer appealed from the Pope of Rome to a General Council, not, that is, to one merely so in name, but to one that in very truth should be representative of the whole Church of Christ throughout the world (Luther, Erasmus, and Melancthon made the same appeal). The Convocation of Canterbury in 1538, Bishop Jewel in 1562, and Richard Hooker in 1594, advocated the same course. To such a Council (whenever it may please God to suffer it) the Church of England would be willing to submit the questions in dispute, just as the question of circumcision was submitted to the assembled Church at Jerusalem (Acts xv.).

The actual schism between the two Churches came from Rome. "On April 27, 1570, the shameful mandate went forth,

branch of that Church she is not liable to the constant fluctuations of doctrine which we see continually taking place in the sects as each new leader arises. She has built her house on a rock.

It is true that there is action and reaction in the Church of England, but with this essential difference—the substance of her faith never changes as the faith of the sects is ever changing. It is but the regulated ebb and flow of the tide. Motion in one direction and then in the other is but a condition of life. Like the swing of the pendulum, that motion has always a centre of gravity, which is Holy Scripture as interpreted by the primitive Church. This in the Church of England is faithfully represented by the Prayer-book.

And let us seriously lay to heart the great danger we are in from the unhappy divisions of Protestants in this land. Mere sects can never keep back the advance of Rome. Detached boulders only lash a stream to fury; it gathers strength from such futile resistance, and comes on in its power. But one great rock in its path turns it into a narrower channel, and curbs its will. Turn to the Babel of sects in this land, and then look on Rome with her serried ranks and unity of purpose. These must be met by ranks as unbroken and a front as united. We need more than a so-called Evangelical Alliance of a multitude of denominations differing from one another. We need a true branch

bidding all who would obey Pope Pius V. to break with their own English Church, to secede and form conventicles, to abandon and dethrone their sovereign, and to subject their country, if they could, to a foreign invader" (Curteis's "Bampton Lectures on Dissent," p. 196).

of the Catholic Church, not less Catholic than Rome in the continuity of its history, far more Catholic in the purity of its faith.

It has been asserted, and there seems ground for the assertion, that recent perverts to Romanism have been drawn largely from the ranks of ultra-Protestantism. If it be so, it is not hard to discover a reason. Not merely that men recoil from all this wearisome division, and are fascinated by the unity of Rome, but it is a law of natural retribution. Truths kept out of sight assert themselves at last with all the force of a violent reaction. A man "big with truth new found" is thrown off his balance. The tension has been too great, and he starts aside like a broken bow. For example, a man has been brought up to consider that, provided he holds Protestant doctrine, he is free to join this or that sect. It is, he has heard it asserted, mere bigotry to condemn religious divisions. But that man, when he awakens at last to the plain and repeated injunctions of Scripture on unity, is, as it were, swept away by the rush of a conviction as unanswerable as it is new. At such a juncture there is the Church of Rome before him with a seemingly placid front, offering him at least a visible unity. Unless the Church of England is outspoken on this matter by the mouth of her ministers, this misgiving can never be allayed but in the fold of Rome.

To the great majority of thoughtful Christians, who desire to avoid the glaring errors of Rome on the one hand, and the useless bickerings and subdivisions of the Protestant sects on the other, a Church such as the Church of England, Protestant as well as Catholic, is

a necessity. Let us thank God that He has called her to fulfil this high mission.

What better words can be found to express the attitude of the true sons of the Church than those found in the will of the saintly Bishop Ken, the author of the well-known Morning and Evening Hymns?—

"As for my religion, I die in the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Faith, professed by the whole Church before the division of East and West; more particularly I die in the communion of the Church of England, as it stands distinguished from all Papal and Puritan innovations, and as it adheres to the doctrine of the Cross!"

ii.—*It is Established.*

One main difficulty with not a few earnest Christians is that the Church should have the support of the State, or, as the phrase is, should be "established." To them it seems to be leaning on an arm of flesh, whereas the weapons of Christ's Church are not carnal; His kingdom, they urge, is not of this world.

It is evident that this, the *religious* scruple, deserves an attentive examination.

But first of all, let us define the question at issue.

Surely one-half of the misconceptions of the world arise from vagueness of language. And is not this one of them? Under the general terms of "an arm of flesh" and "carnal weapons" there lurks an impression of the religious compulsion of past ages. It is true we fear no renewal of the horrors of the Inquisition, the fires of Oxford and of Smithfield, or the massacre of St. Bartholomew. All this is past. In

this country, at least, every man is free to worship God after his own way. But these errors of the past have prejudiced the whole question of the attitude of States towards Christianity. The swing of the pendulum has turned, and there is danger of the opposite extreme. Christendom no longer unsheathes the sword in the cause of the Cross. No crusade is now preached. Force and persecution are no longer held to be the weapons of Christ. But in avoiding that extreme of religious compulsion, are we to yield up altogether the principle of the *national recognition* of Christianity?

The questions which our own generation will have to decide are whether the State, while it secures religious liberty to all, is justified in maintaining a National Church; and whether the Church is free to accept such aid from the State. Both these positions are assailed. Let our appeal be to the Word of God.

All will be agreed as to the indispensable nature of *personal* religion. Between each soul and God there must be personal dealings. But is that to be the limit of a man's religion? Is it not written, "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others"? (Phil. ii. 4). More, then, is required of him. He is one of a *family*, and in that capacity also he must yield himself to God—"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Josh. xxiv. 15).

But passing from the personal and domestic aspects of a man we come to his *civil* capacity. He is a citizen, one of a nation. Will it be maintained that in this aspect he owes God nothing? Is God the God

of the individual, and the God of the family, and not the God of the nation? Nay, is there any one relationship or capacity that is not God's wholly and God's only? Can there be any reservation from the Command, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind"? (Matt. xxii. 37).

Very sacred as is the personal communion between man and God—very beautiful as is the sight of the whole house serving the Lord—something more is required of us. God must be honoured by the nation as a nation. There must be, that is, a national religion, a national Church. "Happy is that people that is in such a case; yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord" (Ps. cxliv. 15).

And this is what took place at the beginning. There was one man, Abraham, and he was called "the friend of God." Here was *personal* religion. Then in the twelve patriarchs we behold the *family* serving God; till we come in due course to the chosen people, "a holy nation" (Ex. xix. 6). There were these three natural stages—the individual, the family, the nation. Are we prepared to draw the line at the family, and to forbid the *national* recognition of God?

But let us approach the question from a different point. If we turn to the history of Christianity we see that this question, as might be expected, arose very soon. Beginning in the stable and the carpenter's shop, the new faith climbed upwards in the social scale. We hear in turn of the wife of Herod's steward, of Pilate's own wife, of Sergius Paulus, Felix, Festus,

Agrippa, in turn brought more or less within its influence, till among the followers of the Nazarene are "they of Cæsar's household" (Phil. iv. 22), and finally Constantine the great Emperor himself. What was to be the influence of Christianity on those in power? Was it to be relegated to the closet and the hidden life of the soul, or might not this vantage ground and these opportunities be regarded as talents intrusted to them by God to be used for His glory? The Church of England has answered the question in the affirmative. "Blessed Lord, who hast called Christian princes to the defence of Thy faith, and hast made it their duty to promote the spiritual welfare, together with the temporal interest of their people" (*Service for the 20th of June, the Queen's Accession*).

In opposition to this view, it has been urged that the *civil* and *religious* should be kept distinct. "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's" (Matt. xxii. 21). But is that the meaning of our Lord's words? Is Cæsar's one empire and God's another, with a distinct line of demarcation between? Is it not rather true that "there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God"? (Rom. xiii. 1). Viewed in this light, tribute to Cæsar (and this was the question under debate) is lawful (Rom. xiii. 6). It is no encroachment on God's due, because Cæsar's power is held under God, Who is "the only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords" (1 Tim. vi. 15). If this be so, the civil power ought never to say to Him from Whom it is derived, "I owe Thee nothing."

But did not our Lord Himself say, "My kingdom

is not of this world" (John xviii. 36), and does not that mean, "I renounce all aid from earthly power"?

Much will necessarily depend on the connection in which these words were uttered. Our Lord was standing before the judgment-seat of the Roman governor. The accusation of blasphemy set forth before the chief priests had been varied before Pilate to a charge of fomenting rebellion against the Roman power. "We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that He Himself is Christ a King" (Luke xxiii. 2). On being pressed as to this claim of kingly power, our Lord explains that it was not of an earthly nature or to be advanced by force. "My kingdom is not of this world: if My kingdom were of (*lit.*, from) this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is My kingdom not from hence" (John xviii. 36). In other words, His kingdom was a spiritual kingdom in the hearts of men, a power derived from above.

Does the question of established Churches at all arise in this passage? Our Lord repudiates the imputation of earthly aggression: He never renounces the voluntary homage of "thrones and dominions and principalities and powers," for they "were created by Him and *for Him*" (Col. i. 16). Is there not a sure word of prophecy concerning His Church that kings shall be her nursing fathers and queens her nursing mothers? (Isa. xlix. 23). Is it not all working on to the grand consummation that is foretold when the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ? (Rev. xi. 15).

But there is another class of objections, not in this instance drawn directly from the Bible. It is urged that it is unjust, where so many forms of religious faith prevail, for the State to select one and to establish it. It is claimed that the nation as a nation should be neutral, and *should withdraw from taking any active part in the promotion of religion.* We draw special attention to this new principle, for we shall have to revert to it hereafter.

Let us first examine the charge of *injustice.* Far back in the past, with the growth of the national life, we behold the growth of the National Church. It is difficult to say when it was not. "Like some tall palm the noiseless fabric sprung." No sound of clamour or discord was heard in the building. It was not, then, that one form of religious faith was chosen out of many, for one only existed; and not till the last three centuries have there been secessions from that National Church of England. Earnest if mistaken men were willing for conscience sake to forego this vantage ground for the spreading of God's truth, and to form separate sects for the propagation of their peculiar teaching. Such a course was at least intelligible, and we can respect the spirit of self-sacrifice, if we are bound to maintain that the words of Scripture condemn the schism.

But it is no such spirit of self-sacrifice that actuates their successors in these days. It is now no question of religious liberty. Liberty of conscience is indulged in some instances even to extravagance. Men are free to worship as they will: if schism be a sin by the law of God, it is no crime by the law of man.

But they desire more than religious liberty, they clamour for *religious equality*. They say, "Because we dissent, we object to the State supporting *any* one form of Christianity. It is a matter of conscience with us." Grant that it is so, still even in matters of conscience in a community the conscience of the majority must govern its *corporate* action. It is as much a matter of conscience with the members of the Church of England that a Christian State should avow and support and not merely tolerate Christianity. It is part of their creed that "without God nothing is strong, nothing is holy," and that therefore a nation, if it desires to be strong and holy, must as a nation serve God. Willingly would they yield to the scruples of conscience in others where they can be conceded; but there are demands which they have no choice but to withstand. Take the case of a righteous war undertaken for the protection of the oppressed, or the emancipation of the enslaved. There will be voices lifted up against it by those who conscientiously object to all war, no matter what the cause, as unchristian. But does the State stay its hand—does it exempt the Quakers or the Peace Society from the war taxes? We know that it does not.

But in this matter of the National Church the case is stronger still. The justification for not yielding to the scruples of Dissenters rests on yet higher grounds. We have two duties to perform—a duty towards God and a duty towards our neighbour. We can have no shadow of a doubt that God has a claim to be honoured in each heart, in each family, in each community. Why, then, do we pause? Because we are

appealed to not to wound our neighbour's conscience, not to outrage his sense of right and wrong. It is not that any compulsion is laid upon our neighbour; he is absolutely free to worship as he will, but the *principle* of a National Church offends him. Here then are conflicting duties to God and to our neighbour. To which shall we incline? Hear the Word of the Lord.

Jesus said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. *This is the first and great commandment.* And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matt. xxii. 37—39).

It must needs be that these two principles will seem to come into collision at times. Is the first always to give way? Is the second never to be second? when the Word of God has not left it doubtful which is the first and great commandment, and which is only second and like unto it.

Surely our course is clear in the case before us. Our first and great motive as Christian citizens must be this, "*Thy* will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

We need no stronger argument against *schism* than that it should be thus tending to deprive God of the national recognition of His Name in this State of England in all her public acts and departments. It comes to this: because Christians are so divided, Christ is to have no place in the corporate action of a State.

Take as an example of this new tendency of the times, the recent controversy respecting the teaching of religion in Government schools. There are those, and they are for the most part Nonconformists, who

confidently lay down the principle that the State should not teach religion, but that this should be left to the voluntary efforts of the various religious bodies.

The Church of England, with a remarkable unanimity as strongly advocates the opposite view, on the ground that all should be begun, continued, and ended in God. Education from which religious teaching is deliberately excluded is, in her view, contrary to God's Word, which bids us in all our ways acknowledge Him (Prov. iii. 6). Nor is secular education necessarily beneficial. If knowledge be power, then education will be powerful for good or for evil according to the direction which is given to it. Mere power without control is like the runaway steam-engine rushing on its wild course. In imparting mere knowledge to our children we may be but sowing the wind, to find ourselves in the next generation powerless to control the whirlwind. Let us but study that page of history that preceded the French Revolution, when knowledge was deliberately divorced from religion, and compare what followed with that terrible catalogue of sin which St. Paul introduces with these significant words, "Even as they *did not like to retain God in their knowledge*, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient" (Rom. i. 28). The words that follow may well make us shrink from embarking on such a venture! Is it too late to appeal to all Christians to unite in this controversy on the common ground that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy is understanding"? (Prov. ix. 10).

There are numbers of Churchmen who hold this to

be a sacred and vital principle, and if the case ever arose, where no alternative could be found between secular education and handing a school over to the religious teaching of a dissenting body, they would not hesitate to cry aloud to the Civil Power in the words of the true mother in the Bible, "O my lord, give her the child, and in no wise slay it" (1 Kings iii. 26).

And what if this principle is to be still further extended? We have seen our marriage laws rendered independent of Christianity. We have seen our Universities dissociated from all necessary connection with religion. What if hereafter there is to be neither national fast nor national thanksgiving? What if the deliberations of Parliament are no longer to be opened with prayer? What if no sanction of the Most High is to be asked at the coronation of our sovereigns? What if the customary religious forms and services are to be expunged from the administration of justice? —for to all this the principle is tending which in its fullest development is the disestablishment of the National Church. It may be pleaded that public religious ceremonials have already in some instances lapsed into formalism and insignificance. It may or may not be so; but to abolish them would be on the part of the nation a deliberate act of repudiation of God in those departments.

And yet there are not wanting those who advocate all this in the interests of Christianity. They maintain that it is not even open to Christ's Church to accept such aid from the State. They contend that it will become more spiritual if it is withdrawn from

all that is secular. Let us not fear to join issue on such a point, for it is utterly false.

It was the spirit of Judaism that advocated the *separation* of the religious and secular. The Jew isolated religion; his idea of sanctity was separation. He stood aloof from other nations; he abstained from certain acts. His creed was made up of prohibitions, such as "Touch not, taste not, handle not" (Col. ii. 21).

The spirit of Christianity, on the other hand, is *permeation.* It diffuses its influence in every quarter like the leaven. It was St. Peter who learned that what God had cleansed was neither common nor unclean (Acts x. 15); St. Paul, that every creature of God was good, and nothing to be refused if it be received with thanksgiving, for it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer (1 Tim. iv. 4). Again, the Apostle to the Gentiles taught that nothing was profane or was to be withdrawn from religion, that our labour was to be done *as to the Lord*, our very eating and drinking, and all that we do, *to the glory of God.* In God's eyes nothing is secular. There is no division with Him but godliness and sin, "without Him nothing is strong, nothing is holy."

Whence, then, this new doctrine of placing limitations on the province of Christianity?

We shall be told that whatever it may be in God's sight, in the course of this world there is an admitted distinction between the "religious" and "secular." And in a sense it is true. But if unduly pressed it becomes false. It is a distinction only of *degree* and not of *kind.* It is true that certain acts have more

direct reference to God, and as such are called "religious." In like manner, those more immediately occupied in the service of God are styled *clergy*. But will it be maintained as a consequence that the *laity* are not a part of Christ's Church, or that any so-called "secular" act can be withdrawn from the sanction of God? No; viewed in this light the Christian recognizes no such distinction. Clergy and laity are alike within the Church, the "religious" and "secular" are alike to be done in the name of God. His own Word confirms us in this belief: "In *all* thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths."

Are we, then, prepared to stand by with folded hands while one by one from our public departments and national acts the acknowledgment of God is withdrawn? Let us make no mistake; all this is entailed by disestablishment. *It means a nation without a national creed.* A nation is not a mere multitude—*i.e.*, a concourse of units that will melt away at the next chance. It has a corporate existence. It has a common history in the past, a common interest in the future. We recognize national aims and policy. We make national alliances or embark on national conflicts. We bind ourselves as a nation to obligations and treaties. We confess to national humiliations and glory in national triumphs. And is there not to be that which sanctifies all—a national creed? And let us never forget that God has in His Word emphatically laid down the principle of national responsibility. Israel of old paid the penalty of national apostacy. Jerusalem knew not the things belonging to her peace, and her house was left unto her desolate. Or, to take

a wider glance, it was counted to them for sin that "the kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ" (Acts iv. 26).

It is as Englishmen that we would lift up our voice against such a proposition as the relinquishment of a national religion. It is in the interests of our country that we raise the warning cry. The Church has her Lord's promises on which to rest, and so long as she abides faithful to Him, her candlestick shall not be removed.

"Crowns and thrones may perish,
Kingdoms rise and wane,
But the Church of Jesus
Constant will remain.
Gates of hell can never
'Gainst that Church prevail;
We have Christ's own promise,
And that cannot fail."

But how will it fare with the State? Let us lay to heart the warning of old time, "The Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded: and he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin: the Lord is with you, while ye be with Him; and if ye seek Him, He will be found of you; *but if ye forsake Him, He will forsake you*" (2 Chron. xv. 1, 2). Let us call to mind Isaiah's words of still wider range, "*The nation and kingdom that will not serve Thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted*" (lx. 12). It was in a like spirit that the strong earnest words of Owen, the Nonconformist, were addressed to the Long Parliament: "Some think if you were well settled, you

ought not, as rulers of the nation, to put forth your power for the interest of Christ. The good Lord keep your hearts from that apprehension! If it once comes to this, that you shall say you have nothing to do with religion as rulers of the nation, God will quickly manifest that He hath nothing to do with you as rulers of the nation."

We have not touched upon the *effects* of disestablishment. We have but regarded the question in its light as England's national acknowledgment or repudiation of God. But if disestablishment comes, who can gauge its results? We are told that were State aid withdrawn, voluntary effort would supply its place. Is there any reasonable ground for expecting that this will be the case? We do not dwell on the shock that will have been given to all religious endowment. We merely picture the immediate demand on the religious resources of the nation. Conceive our army and navy suddenly deprived of religious ministrations—our gaols and our workhouses dependent on voluntary religious enterprise. It is conceivable that the English residents abroad may be willing and able to maintain a chaplain were he to be withdrawn from the British Embassies. It is certain that a great effort would be made by the Church to mitigate the spiritual destitution at home; but it is also certain that, in the midst of her own difficulties at such a time, it must fall far short of the need, and that, in making that effort, all her great missionary undertakings, all the infinite variety of religious and philanthropic enterprises in which she now engages, will be crippled. *The real shock will fall upon the poor.* They will be

the sufferers to an extent which none can anticipate beforehand. The charitable benevolence, finding an outlet in the many institutions by which they now profit, will at such a juncture be absorbed by the more pressing needs of religion. Those who gave to the hospital will transfer that gift to the impoverished Church; while multitudes at home and abroad will be deprived of a knowledge of the way of salvation, to whose ears, under the existing system, it would have been brought. Are we prepared for all this?

But we shall be told that we have not taken into account the action of the Dissenting bodies at such a time. But in truth we cannot hope for much. From the very nature of things their action must be disunited; there can be no system or organization among the sects. Earnest efforts will undoubtedly be made, but they must needs be desultory and disconnected, even if they escape being discordant. And looking to the past, what has voluntary effort done in that unoccupied field of religious enterprise—our merchant vessels and great ocean steamers? Has it supplied, or even attempted to supply, these with the ministrations of religion? It has not even been able to deal with those tracts in our own land where the spiritual destitution is the greatest. If any one desires a conclusive test, let him but wander through that vast district in the East of London which is inhabited by the poorer classes.[1] What is Dissent doing there? absolutely nothing. Where are the chapels? you will not

[1] "In the East [of London], where the poverty is too great to admit of the existence of a church on Dissenting principles" (Ritchie, "Religious Life in London," p. 82).

find them. All that is done is done by the Church. The reason is plain: the poverty of the inhabitants is too great for voluntary efforts. Dissent, which is dependent on voluntary effort, would starve in such a locality. It is in the name of the poor man that we plead for the maintenance of a National Church. This was the view of the case that so weighed with the great statesman and historian. After saying that it is not on behalf of the noble and wealthy that he advocated an Established Church, Lord Macaulay continues: "The person about whom I am uneasy is *the working man*—the man who would find it difficult to pay even 5*s.* or 10*s.* a year out of his small earnings for the ministrations of religion. What is to become of him under the voluntary system? Is he to go without religious instruction altogether? That we should all think a great evil to himself and a great evil to society. Is he to pay for it out of his slender means? That would be a heavy task. Is he to be dependent on the liberality of others? That is a somewhat precarious and somewhat humiliating dependence. I prefer, I own, that system under which there is, in the rudest and most secluded districts, a house of God, where public worship is performed after a manner acceptable to the great majority of the community, and where the poorest may partake of the ordinances of religion, not as an alms, but as a right."[1]

We have said enough to point the bearings of the great internal struggle on which we in England are now entering. We witness the lamentable, the un-

[1] Speech on the Maynooth Grant, 1845.

christian, sight of those who profess and call themselves Christians gathering into two opposite camps—the one marshalled to assail, the other to defend the National Church. Before the shock comes, will none be won by the appeal that comes to them from God's Word, "Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another?" (Acts vii. 26). Nay, in the stir and din of the coming strife is the Master's own voice to be hushed? "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John xiii. 34, 35).

If such rivalry and contention be the fruit of Dissent, can it be according to the will of God? Can a good tree bring forth evil fruit?

Whichever side we take, or if we take no side, let us not shut our eyes to our responsibility. In a representative community every man legislates, every man rules. If the National Church be maintained or be disestablished, it will be a *collective* act, and each of us will have his proportion of accountability to God. The statesman can only give expression to the prevailing, if undefined, will of the nation. He has been likened to the mountain side, which receives in mist all that it gives back in flood. Let us, then, see to it that, whatever be the issue, we shall, by the part we bear in it, have delivered our own soul.

We are often told that the great wave of progress sets strongly against our position, and that we ought to keep abreast of it. Ought we not rather to meet it? We may yet break it. Grains of sand throw

back an ocean when rocks and cliffs go down before it.

There is yet time to maintain the old principle of our national acknowledgment of God. Have we owed nothing to it of our national greatness? Have we not found it true that "righteousness exalteth a nation"? (Prov. xiv. 34). Have we not been upheld again and again in the time of national trouble, and are we to go back now from the admission, "There is none other that fighteth for us, but only Thou, O God"? He has honoured us as a nation, because as a nation we honoured Him. God in His mercy keep us from the doom of Amalek: "He was the first of the nations; but his latter end shall be that he perish for ever" (Num. xxiv. 20).

If the day be coming when we shall sacrifice a principle that has stood us in good stead to these "enlightened principles (as they are called) of progress," there may still be an imposing edifice of national prosperity under summer skies. But when too late we shall find it was built upon the sand. In the times of "the distress of nations with perplexity" which are coming, when our fathers were wont to cast their cause upon God, how will it fare with that edifice? Why, because it was not built upon the rock, when "the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, it fell; and great was the fall of it!" (Matt. vii. 27).

Better far to stand in the old ways, and hand down to another generation the old truth, "Except the Lord build the house, their labour is but lost that build it" (Ps. cxxvii. 1).

iii.—*It uses Forms of Prayer.*

One great objection made to the Church is that it uses a Liturgy, in other words, forms of prayer. It is maintained that written prayers used day after day must become lifeless and at length wearisome; that the words that rise unbidden to the lips in obedience to the promptings of the heart best express its petitions to God. So it is that many go to chapel because they prefer what is called *extemporary prayer*.

Now all will, we believe, admit that in *private prayer* we are free to use our own words in order to make our requests known unto God. But the question before us is this—Which is the most excellent way, in the case where many are gathered together, to make their common supplications unto God?

Let us bear in mind what is the Scriptural ground for common or public prayer. Our Lord gave this promise to His disciples: "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven" (Matt. xviii. 19). This has been called "the Charter of Public Worship" (*Goulburn's "Personal Religion," p.* 116).

The one condition here laid down is *agreement*. If there be no agreement we cannot look for fulfilment. How, then, shall that agreement be best secured? Will it be by a carefully-prepared, a well-known, honoured form of prayer, or by the chance petitions that fall on the spur of the moment from the lips of the minister? We do not say that where he is so gifted you may not have the distinct utterance, the

readiness of thought, the facility of expression, which will admit of the hearers taking up the petitions as they are uttered and appropriating them to themselves. It is quite conceivable that in such cases agreement may be secured. But we do say that one or other of these is often found wanting, that the congregation is too dependent on the minister, and is often compelled to listen to ill expressed, hesitating sentences, and wearisome repetitions. Or put it in this way: the minister's frame of mind may be, from purely passing causes, altogether out of tune for the time, and what then becomes of the agreement? The wings of his soul are heavy, and it cannot soar in prayer; it follows that the prayer of all must have a low flight for that day. Is this well, to be so dependent upon the minister? We go further: we say that if it is left to one man to compose the prayer, it is inevitable but that the prayer will be strongly coloured by that man's feelings and impulses whether momentary or constitutional. If this be so, to some at least in the congregation the prayer will be ill-adapted, and fail in some measure to secure agreement.

We have said nothing about the *omissions* which are only too sure to occur in extemporary prayer. Compare, by way of example, the range of subjects in the Church Litany with any such prayer, and see if in the latter there are not many things left unsaid. We have all heard the story of the poor widow who, when asked why she had left the Chapel for the Church, answered, "Because the Church is the only place where they pray for my boy at sea." The petition for "all that travel by land or by water" had

found a hearty response in her heart; it had secured agreement. And how many hearts like that mother's find in the Church prayers the petition they can find nowhere else! A Liturgy, therefore, covers more ground than any extemporary prayer can hope to do.

The complaint that it becomes wearisome from very familiarity is a complaint that does not come from Churchmen. It is a significant fact that it comes from those who do not use that Liturgy. It is rather what they suppose must ensue than what has ensued within the experience of Churchmen. To Churchmen the words only become more and more dear by lapse of time. They have used them from childhood to old age. They are inwoven into the web of their life. All that is tenderest in their recollection, all that is truest is associated with them. A past sorrow gave to this petition a new meaning—that thanksgiving still reflects the light of a great mercy. Those dear ones that have been taken from them have used the very words that they use; their own children will use them after them. If you tell Churchmen that such words will become wearisome, they will not understand you. *You* do not weary of the words of your Bible from familiarity. Ah! but you say, "That is very different; it is the Word of God." And we answer that you will find the greater part of the Prayer-book is taken from the Word of God. Try it by your open Bible, and you will be astonished to find how large a part.[1] Will extemporary prayer come out as well under this test?

[1] "Above two-thirds of the Daily Service of the Church consists of extracts from Scripture."—Sadler's "Church Doctrine, Bible Truth," p. 24.

But it is to your own experience that we appeal. Are there not hymns of which you feel you could never tire? For instance, "*Just as I am*," "*Jesu, Lover of my Soul*," "*Rock of Ages*." Does it tire you to hear those hymns? You know it does not. Neither does it tire us to hear the well-loved words of our Common Prayer.

But you say, "God loves not repetition." Let us turn to that sad page in the Bible that tells of Gethsemane, and we find this record, "He went away again, and prayed the third time, *saying the same words*" (Matt. xxv. 44). Such repetition is not that *vain* repetition which He Himself condemned in the heathen (Matt. vi. 7).

At least it must be admitted that a Liturgy has this advantage over extemporary prayer, that those whose hearing and eyesight are failing them are not on that account debarred from participating in Divine Service.

But still you urge it is *a form*. We do not stop to inquire how far so-called extemporary prayers are really so, or whether in many instances they are not the result of preparation. We are content to admit that the Church employs a form of prayer. But we put it to you whether this objection (if it be an objection) cannot be urged with equal justice against all extemporary prayer in public. To that one who prays without book it may indeed be the outpouring of his own heart. We say to that one it may be all this; but unquestionably to no one else. For the moment that the words have passed the speaker's lips, and are adopted by the congregation, to *them* at least they are

a form of prayer. It does not rise unbidden from *their* hearts. *They* are employing words dealt out to them by the one who prays. They can no more lay claim to that extemporary prayer than they can lay claim to an extemporary sermon. If, then, in "common supplication" a form of prayer is inevitable, let us have the very best; not that which is put forth on the spur of the moment, but that which holy men of old have framed after much praying and careful study.

We come now to the charge that written or prepared prayers are unspiritual. It fails the moment it is examined. All must admit that a process of thought takes place in the mind before the mouth can give utterance to it. Will it be contended that if a man gives expression to that thought by word of mouth it is spiritual, but that if he writes it down for the use of others it is unspiritual? Was the answer of the child Samuel unspiritual, "Speak; for Thy servant heareth," because the words had been dictated to him by Eli? Was it wrong for the Prodigal to settle beforehand what he would say to his Father? Is it wrong in us to use the same words?

Let no one, then, idly talk of forms of prayer as unspiritual. If it be true that he who prays out of a book cannot pray with the spirit, it must be equally true that he who sings out of a book cannot sing with the spirit. If to use a Prayer-book is wrong, then to use a hymn-book is wrong also. They stand or fall together.

But let us pause to reflect whether there is not one great danger to which public extemporary prayer is liable. *Public*, we say, because it is open to one pray-

ing in secret to pause and collect his thoughts. But one praying in public, where all such pauses would be unseemly and distracting, is apt to say on the spur of the moment (and it could hardly be otherwise) what on calmer reflection he would have shrunk from uttering. Bear in mind that prayer is an address to the Most High God. Ought rash and hasty words to be uttered in *that* presence? Is it not written that "Moses spake unadvisedly with his lips" (Ps. cvi. 33), and St. Peter, often too impulsive, made a rash proposition, "not knowing what he said"? (Luke ix. 33). Can, then, we hope to be above such dangers?

Neither does God lightly regard such things, for the Lord said to that companion of Job, Eliphaz the Temanite, "My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of Me the thing that is right, as My servant Job hath. Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to My servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; . . . lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of Me the thing which is right, like My servant Job" (Job xlii. 7, 8).

It were better to lay to heart the warning of the wise king, "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God; for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few" (Eccles. v. 2). It were better to "*take with us words*," that is, forms of prayer, as the Prophet Hosea exhorted Israel, "Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto Him, Take

away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips" (Hos. xiv. 2).

But if we need an argument that shall be conclusive, we find it in the fact that our Lord and Master gave His disciples a form of prayer. "One of His disciples said unto Him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. And He said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in Heaven," &c. (Luke xi. 1, 2). Our Lord would never have given a form of prayer if forms of prayer had been either wrong or even inexpedient.

And a further truth is established by this passage. It establishes the truth that we have *need to be taught to pray*. Could we ask John the Baptist why he taught his disciples to pray, he would answer, Because they had need of it. Could we ask that other disciple why he besought Christ to teach them to pray, he would answer, Because we had need of it. Ay, could we ask the Lord Himself why He gave His disciples a form of prayer, His answer would be no other.

In adopting a form of prayer, then, we are adopting what has the sanction of the Bible. God gave the Israelites forms to be used in their public services (Deut. xxi. 6, 7, xxvi. 3—10; Num. vi. 23; 1 Chron. xvi. 7). The Jews of our Lord's time had forms of prayer in their synagogues; and, as we know, *He* honoured those services with His presence, for we read, "as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day" (Luke iv. 16). He denounced the hypocrisy of the worshippers, but He never breathed a disapproval of the worship. Nay, by His presence, His constant presence, at those services, He gave His

sanction to the method of that worship. What He has approved let us be slow to condemn.

One last thought before we leave this part of our subject. Who shall say how much the Church of England owes to her Liturgy as a witness to the truth? Human teachers are exposed to error. They would be more than human if they were not liable to be "carried about by every blast of vain doctrine." The tide of public opinion sets first in this direction and then in that, and the teacher is carried with it. But as the ship at anchor swings round with the tide only to the length of its cable, so are the clergy of the Church of England held fast to their anchor. It is the safeguard of the congregation. If the minister is carried away by strange doctrines, they have a "form of sound words" by which to try him. Take but this fact, which admits of no challenge and needs no comment. One of the best-informed Dissenting periodicals[1] states that two centuries ago there were 258 Dissenting congregations in England, all of which professed orthodox opinions. They had no Liturgy, no fixed forms of public worship. Out of these 258 no less than 235 have since become Socinian—that is, they no longer hold the Godhead of Jesus Christ our Lord; they can no longer say with us, He is God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God!

Here we leave this question of the Liturgy of the Church. We trust that we may ever thus "with one mind and one mouth glorify God" (Rom. xv. 6); and form though it be, we may ever "hold fast this form of sound words" (2 Tim. i. 13).

[1] *Eclectic Review*, February, 1832.

iv.—*The Church's Ritual.*

The charge of ritualism is the one perhaps most often levelled by Dissenters against the Church of England in these days. It is, therefore, scarcely possible to ignore it in a work that treats of the hindrances that stand in the way of a return to that Church.

We have no intention of attempting to define how much or how little ritual should be used. Such an attempt would be not only presumptuous on our part, but foreign to the scope of this book. All we would venture to do is to throw out some suggestions, by way of explanation, which may tend to remove misconceptions, and foster a wider spirit of tolerance in matters wherein there must of necessity be divergence of taste and judgment. At the same time, we would not wish it to be supposed that we are blind to the dangers of *excessive* ritual. Not only does it defeat its own legitimate object of being a means of expression in public worship, but the spirit of needless and restless change is alike disquieting to the congregation and distracting to the minister. It must always be that the type of "true and laudable service" is to be found rather in her who "sat at Jesus' feet and heard His Word," than in her who was "cumbered with much serving." This side of the question is, however, not now before us. In these pages we address ourselves to those whose tendency is, if not to reject ritual altogether, at least to reduce it to the most meagre limits.

Let us first glance at the history of this movement. We must never lose sight of the fact that what we now

witness is a strong reaction on the bare and cold Services of a former generation. Indications are not wanting that the tide of that feeling has reached its height, and we may now look for the ebb. Be this as it may, it is not difficult to see how this reaction came about.

Throughout society in things secular there has been a remarkable awakening of interest in matters of art and taste. The very shop windows bear testimony to the cultivation of all that is graceful and ornamental. Place the newspapers of this day, with their advertisements of concerts and oratorios, side by side with those of the last generation, and we shall realize the astonishing growth of musical taste and attainment which has taken place of late years.

Is it, then, to be wondered at if the tone and character of public worship should not have remained stationary, but especially in those parts which are admittedly [1] accessories and not essentials there should have been a corresponding change? The music, being but a means of expression for our praise, had become ill adapted directly it ceased, according to present ideas, to be either joyous or tasteful. It was felt on all sides that some fitter expression must be found for the voice of praise and thanksgiving—its general character being implied in the words, "Is any merry? Let him sing psalms" (James v. 13).

But we may trace a more defined motive underlying the increased attention which is now bestowed

[1] "The particular forms of Divine worship, and the rites and ceremonies appointed to be used therein, being things in their own nature indifferent and alterable, and so acknowledged" (Preface to the Prayer-book).

on the things of the sanctuary—a motive, as we cannot but believe, acceptable to God.

There was a time, within living memory, when it was no uncommon sight to behold restoration and embellishment going on all around, and God's house alone untouched and uncared for in the parish. There were those who were very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts; who felt stricken with shame to see all that is costly and luxurious being lavished on men's dwelling houses, while *His* house should be treated with indifference, and even slovenly neglect. Was it not God's Word that cried to them, "Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste? Now, therefore, thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Consider your ways" (Hag. i. 4, 5).

It was true, they reasoned, that God cared neither for silver nor gold, nor for carved work. The worship rising from the Indian cabin or from beneath the shadow of the African palm was as acceptable to Him as that which mingled with the pealing organ in some dim cathedral. Nathaniel held communion with God under the fig-tree: Paul knelt down and prayed on the sea-shore at Tyre (John i. 48; Acts xxi. 5). Yet it was also true that He would accept the spirit that sought to honour Him before men. He accepted the will of David, who declared, "I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God. . . . Moreover, because I have set my affection to the house of my God, I have of mine own proper good, of gold and silver, which I have given to the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house" (1 Chron. xxix. 2, 3). He accepted the

labour of Solomon, for when he had made an end of his prayer of dedication, "The glory of the Lord filled the house." "And the Lord appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to Myself for an house of sacrifice" (2 Chron. vii. 1, 12). It was true that it was written in the New Testament, "Solomon built Him an house. Howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands" (Acts vii. 47, 48). That is, there are now no special places where that Holy Presence is *localized*, as under the Old Covenant in the Temple of Jerusalem. God may now be sought and found at all times and in all places by all people. And therefore, without claiming any such preference as this for God's House, there was still a feeling in their hearts that the building set apart for His service should be treated with special honour. They reverenced His Book; they kept holy His Day; why, then, should they disregard His House? If they were met with the objection that there is no temple in heaven (Rev. xxi. 22), they felt it was because there is no sin there. So long as they were in a sinful world there was need to *set apart* a special day for the Lord's Day, a special place for the Lord's House. When, therefore, they recalled how that twice their Lord had cleansed His Father's house with a zeal that was described as "eating Him up" (John ii. 17)—how He had sanctioned with His presence the feast of the dedication of that temple (John x. 22)—how the tribute He had himself paid was the temple tax (Matt. xvii. 27)—and the widow's mite He so commended had been cast into the temple treasury (Mark xii. 42)—they

could no longer doubt that their own zeal for God's House was acceptable to Him.

This point once reached, it followed that the things of the sanctuary, with all the surroundings of Divine Service, should be regarded with like reverence. The Lord had Himself spoken of the temple sanctifying all that appertained to it (Matt. xxiii. 17—19). Let it be granted that this feeling has at times assumed undue proportions.[1] Still many will approve, few certainly will withhold their respect from the motive from which it springs.

This brings us to the question of ritual. There are those who maintain it to be absolutely wrong in principle. There are others who, admitting the principle as Scriptural and reasonable, hold that it is carried to excess in the Church of England.

Let us say a few words on each of these points.

I. *The principle.*

We cannot in any Scriptural inquiry shut out the fact that in the Old Testament the ritual of the Tabernacle was "according to the pattern showed to Moses in the mount" (Heb. viii. 5), and that the two workmen who fashioned it were "filled with the spirit of God" (Ex. xxxv. 31). Neither can we deny that ritual of a marked character is to be found in the service of

[1] If we may venture to lay down a broad principle, it shall be in the words of another, that the character of Divine Service should be "august." This test seems to exclude both over-minuteness of detail, and obscure, strained, or fantastic symbolism. It also indicates the breadth of conception that breathes in the definition of David, "the house that is to be builded for the Lord must be exceeding magnifical" (1 Chron. xxii. 5).

heaven, as described in the Book of the Revelation of St. John.

Let it be urged that the former was merely typical, and the latter symbolical. But then is anything more than this claimed for the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England? Take for example the *surplice*, that once unhappy source of contention—what does it typify but the fine linen of saints? (Rev. xix. 8). Has it never served to recall the words, "Let Thy priests be clothed with righteousness"? (Ps. cxxxii. 9). Then there is the *stole* passing over the shoulders, which reminds the wearer of the yoke of Christ which he has taken upon him. Again, the *staff* of the bishop points to his pastoral office; while the *mitre* is said to represent the cloven tongue of fire that sat upon each at Pentecost. Or to turn from the minister to the church: the *weather-cock* that surmounts the steeple is to warn the over-confident how an Apostle fell, and the *steeple* itself is a silent finger that points to heaven. If all these were meaningless, then would they indeed be superstitious; but the Church of England claims for these and all her ceremonies that, "they be neither dark nor dumb, but are so set forth, that every man may understand what they do mean, and to what use they do serve."[1]

But the real principle at issue is that of the use of *externals* in the worship of God. Under the term "externals" we would include all outward and visible means of expression or impression authorized by the Church, whether rites and ceremonies, or symbolical

[1] Preface to the Prayer-book. Would that every one would be at the pains to read that admirable composition!

acts of the minister and ornaments of the church. What light does our Lord's own life throw upon this principle?

We can clearly discern this law underlying all His dealings with mankind, that He used *external* means. He might have rejected them altogether. He might have acted on the principle, "Speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed" (Matt. viii. 8). He might have laid down that all external means were so many hindrances, intercepting faith rather than lending it wings to rise. But He did not. To take but one instance out of many, the healing of the deaf and dumb man narrated by St. Mark (vii. 33): "He put His fingers into his ears, and He spit and touched his tongue." The truth He here establishes is that there is a language in external acts; for by these actions He was able to convey teaching to one to whom other avenues of communication were closed.[1] That He should have used similar signs in other cases also shows us that they may be not only substitutes for speech, but its accessories.

We suppose that few will deny that an accompanying act adds force to the speaker's words. Ahijah the Shilonite rending his garment in twelve pieces (1 Kings xi. 30), Agabus binding Paul with Paul's own girdle, lent a singular force to their words by these outward actions (Acts xxi. 11). And that this principle may be extended to worship, is proved by the example of King Hezekiah, who went up into the

[1] For the deaf and dumb, who (to use a common expression) cannot talk on their fingers, a service by signs is used with much success. It should be seen to be appreciated.

Temple and spread that threatening letter before God (2 Kings xix. 14).

Our Lord's own example confirms this. He took little children up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them (Mark x. 16). Thus *by His outward gesture and deed* He declared His good-will towards them.[1] When blessing He was wont to raise His hands, when praying His eyes to heaven. To plead entire submission to His Father's will He fell on His face in Gethsemane. He mentions with implied approval that the publican smote upon his breast in self-humiliation. "Lifting up holy hands" is in Scripture a synonym for prayer; bowing the knee betokens worship; laying the hand upon the mouth self-conviction. What is all this but that external acts can be made instinct with meaning?

Nevertheless some cry out for a worship that shall exclude the body. But it is worse than idle to treat ourselves as though we were all soul. If we attempted it, the very presence of a wasp or bird in church will cause the body to assert itself. But happily such men are wiser than their theories, for when they teach their child to pray they bid it kneel down and put its little hands together, thereby conceding the very principle they so strenuously deny. Who ever dispenses with the *attitude* of prayer, even in their private chamber? Who does not feel the importance of giving to the body its occupation? so that to many it is a help to say their prayers out loud.

God created us body and soul, and we should offer ourselves, our souls and bodies, in our worship. To

[1] Bapt. Service.

let the body, therefore, in its due measure participate in Divine Service is only to fulfil the injunction of Scripture: "Glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. vi. 20).[1]

It is on this conviction, that the senses must be recognized, that the Church has acted in ordaining rites and ceremonies. To take one or two instances. That covering with a fair linen cloth the consecrated bread and wine in the Holy Communion brings to mind the linen clothes in the Holy Sepulchre. Again, there is an eloquence greater than words in the casting of the dust to dust and ashes to ashes into the open grave. And that ring given and received in marriage serves to recall in after days the inviolability of the bond.

But the use of externals is not merely for the edification of the moment. They serve a more far-sighted purpose. A symbol or rite enshrines a vital truth after the truth itself has (for awhile at least) passed into the background. Consider, for instance, how the Font and Communion-table, with their traces of former dignity, must have borne their silent testimony at a time when men thought scorn of Christ's Sacraments. That Font standing by the church door must have told

[1] Those who have witnessed the emotions called forth by the Ammergau Passion Play, or taken note of the hush that by unconscious consent falls upon the mixed crowd that gazes upon Doré's great picture of Christ leaving the Prætorium, will be able to testify to the solemn impressions received through the eye. Old springs of sacred association are touched anew; trains of thought essentially spiritual are awakened. Who will venture to say that such emotions when blended with the act of worship are not "in spirit and in truth?"

its own tale that in the rite of Holy Baptism is the entrance to the Church of Christ. That Holy Communion-table standing at the east end, far up the church, raised above the rest, with the architecture and decoration, as it were, culminating at that point, must have borne witness that no Christian should rest content with admission to the Church, but should press on to lively membership with Christ in that holy ordinance. These are but external symbols, but wherever churches are built all over the world they are reproduced. "There is neither speech nor language, but their voices are heard among them" (Ps. xix.).

May it not be that we shall live to rejoice in the testimony to the Atonement to be found in the cruciform shape of our oldest churches, and in the sign of the Cross at Baptism? Or if the Godhead of Jesus Christ be challenged (as it assuredly is already), may we not be glad to appeal to the antiquity of that act of worship, the bowing of the head at His Name in the Creed? In like manner does not turning to the east while we rehearse the Belief testify more eloquently than words to our looking forward to that day when the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings? (Mal. iv. 2). Thus has the Church made provision for the evil days that are coming, as in that tempest-tossed ship in Adria, when the shipmen, fearing lest they should have fallen upon rocks, cast four anchors out of the stern and wished for the day (Acts xxvii. 29).

On these grounds, therefore, we could not admit the *principle* of external acts of worship to be either Scrip-

turally wrong or even unadvisable, even if our Lord Himself had not set His own seal upon it in those two ordinances which He left us, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord. In these we see the *outward and visible sign* of an inward and spiritual grace—water in the one case, bread and wine in the other. In like manner, the Apostolic ordinances of Confirmation and Ordination were accompanied by the external act of the laying on of hands; and in the visitation of the sick St. James speaks of the ancient custom of anointing with oil.

We see, then, that *externals* in worship serve a double purpose: they serve to express to God the devotion of our hearts; they serve also to impress truth on our own souls.

Thus, in Christ's own ordinance as often as we eat that bread and drink that cup, *we do show the Lord's death* (1 Cor. xi. 26). That is, by these external acts we show our trust in the Lord's death—we, as it were, plead it before God. They are means of *expression*. We worship Him outwardly in our bodies as well as inwardly in our souls.

And we also realize it ourselves by those significant acts. It is an outward and visible sign *impressing* on us an inward and spiritual truth—"a pledge to assure us thereof."

II. But it may be maintained that, though the principle be not wrong when applied in moderation, it is carried to excess in the Church of England.

It is really on this point that earnest minds are divided. And it must be allowed that the amount of ritual is an open question. The compilers of the

Prayer-book candidly admit that it is a question that may be re-opened from time to time, and they themselves acted on this principle.

"*Of such ceremonies as be used in the Church, and have had their beginning by the institution of man, some at the first were of godly intent and purpose devised, and yet at length turned to vanity and superstition; some entered into the Church by undiscreet devotion, and such a zeal as was without knowledge; and for because they were winked at in the beginning, they grew daily to more and more abuses, which not only for their unprofitableness, but also because they have much blinded the people, and obscured the glory of God, are worthy to be cut away and clean rejected; other there be, which, although they have been devised by man, yet it is thought good to reserve them still, as well for a decent order in the Church (for the which they were first devised) as because they pertain to edification, whereunto all things done in the Church (as the Apostle teacheth) ought to be referred.*" [1]

Keeping, then, in view that all such rites and ceremonies are "things indifferent and alterable," that which we contend for in these pages is that a certain latitude must be conceded. It is evident that there are at least two leading types of mind which cannot be ignored. We see it in things secular. To put a case that will fall within the experience of all: we have, say, two friends—the one of demonstrative, impulsive nature, who meets us with the warm grasp of the hand and hearty welcome; the other self-contained, quiet, shrinking from demonstration, but not the less true, not the less trusted. We get letters from these two by

[1] Preface to the Prayer-book.

the same post; the one signs himself in most affectionate terms, the other expresses himself with more reserve. If we are asked whether the first was not by far the warmer friend, we should answer with truth that it was not so, only that they were men of different temperaments.

So it is in religion. You can no more place restriction on that warm, impulsive nature from showing its feelings than you can compel that reserved nature to unveil its inmost workings. It is evident you cannot drill two such natures to one dead level of uniformity. And if man can thus discriminate, how much more can God, to whom all hearts are open! Will He not accept the worship of the one and of the other?

But, then, has the Church of England in her Services made any provision for this diversity of temperament? She has, first of all, attempted by a judicious and yet moderate admixture of ritual to meet the wants of the great majority of natures that lie within these two extremes. But, over and above this, she has provided a certain latitude to be exercised at discretion. We come again and again on the instruction "to be said or sung." If it be deemed advisable her Service can be rendered chorally; or, on occasion (Ash Wednesday, for example), music can be altogether excluded. In the exercise of this discretion she possesses the beautiful choral Services of her cathedrals adapted to a cultivated congregation; while the same Service is suitably performed in a more simple manner in some quiet village church.

It is evident, therefore, that after trying to strike the golden mean, the Church expects all her children

to sink their own special likings and to join their brethren in the common worship of God. She pleads for unity as against private feelings. She points to the Scriptural injunction, "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Phil. ii. 4). She argues that Christ was aware of all this diversity of taste and temperament, and yet that He never contemplated more than one Church. There were to be "diversities of gifts" and "diversities of operations;" there were to be "many members, yet but one body" (1 Cor. xii. 4, 5, 20). Consequently these are her weighty words: "*Although the keeping or omitting of a ceremony, in itself considered, is but a small thing, yet the wilful and contemptuous transgression and breaking of a common order and discipline is no small offence before God. 'Let all things be done among you,' saith St. Paul, 'in a seemly and due order;' the appointment of the which order pertaineth not to private men; therefore no man ought to take in hand, nor presume to appoint or alter any publick or common order in Christ's Church, except he be lawfully called and authorized thereunto.*" (Preface to Prayer-book. See also Art. xxxiv.)

And between Christian and Christian, let there be more of the spirit of charity and of readiness to understand each other—not to go in search of points of difference but of agreement, "to seek peace and ensue it." It is this utter inability to comprehend a different temperament to our own that creates division and seems to threaten or maintain secession.

To one man looking on his neighbour's demonstrative way of worshipping God it seems to be mere formalism, a sensuous theatrical Service, adverse to his

own idea of spirituality. To another, who is differently constituted, and has a vivid sense of "the Father of an Infinite Majesty," it is equally a marvel that any should

> "Strangely deem
> That an unmajestic worship
> Doth *His* majesty beseem."

There is a wholesome lesson in that incident of old time, "As the ark of the Lord came into the city of David, Michal Saul's daughter looked through a window, and saw king David leaping and dancing before the Lord; and she despised him in her heart" (2 Sam. vi. 16). And yet our sympathies are with the warm-hearted king, who, in his joy at bringing home the ark, "danced before the Lord with all his might."

But to this plea for Christian tolerance and a certain latitude, it is often objected by the Protestant sects that the tendency in the Church is all in the direction of increased ritual. If it be so, and we do not deny that there has been much excess at times, at whose door must we in all justice lay the fault? Must not the *balance* of a Church be mainly dependent on numbers? We have seen from one scale of that balance all the numerical weight and opinion withdrawn which is now dissipated over a hundred sects. For one who has seceded to Rome numbers have seceded in the other direction. Consequently their influence over the Church is gone; their voice by their own act is silenced. It was assuredly their duty to have remained in the Church, and to have maintained the equilibrium which, by their act, is for a time at least disturbed.

If, then, we sum up what we have said, it amounts to this: that the principle of external religion is Scriptural. As to its limitations, our reason will tell us that to absolutely exclude the body from participation in worship fosters, not spirituality, but an unhealthy spiritualism. Nay, because this is "against nature, and by consequent against God" (Hooker), it is rather a hindrance to the soul of the worshipper.

On the other hand, to give undue prominence to the external principle is to subordinate the spirit to the body, and is no less against nature, though in a counter direction.[1] We have need to keep under a body that so asserts itself, and to bring it into subjection, otherwise only a spurious enthusiasm is produced which simulates devotion. An unhealthy craving for such stimulant ensues. If we make ourselves dependent on such aids we are like one who can swim only with corks. Accessories such as these must never be more than accessories;[2] separable at any time, if need

[1] We venture to think that this is the true argument against Ritualism. "Ritualism" we take to be the excessive use of ritual, just as "spiritualism" is a distorted spirituality. To talk of the "lust of the flesh" and the "lust of the eye" is surely to beg the question. Where there is "lust of the flesh" it is against the spirit (Gal. v. 17). But when flesh and spirit are enlisted side by side in Divine Service there is no such opposition. Where the flesh is condemned it is always as an antagonistic principle to the spirit (Rom. vii. 14—23; Gal. vi. 8). The participation of the body in Divine Service cannot by any stretch be brought within the works of the flesh mentioned by St. Paul (Gal. v.).

[2] We can have no sort of sympathy with those who have come to love externalism for its own sake. It is a condition of heart akin to that which substitutes the letter for the spirit of

arise,[1] separable from us at the last, when all has to be relinquished. God will judge us by what we are, not by what we can be wrought up to. "We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out" (1 Tim. vi. 7).

Within these limits of a moderate ritual—and they are certainly wide, and wider under some conditions than others—many shades of Divine Service may be included. All we plead for is a measure of Christian tolerance—a real charitable desire, a resolve by God's grace not to misconstrue one another's motives. He that uses a bright and warm service, uses it unto the Lord, and he that uses it not, to the Lord he doth not use it (Rom. xiv. 6). Let us lay to heart the principle laid down by the Synod of 1640 on the practice or omission of a certain rite: "We desire that the rule of charity prescribed by the apostle may be observed, which is, that they which use this rite despise not those

the law. Let us not blink the liability to abuse to which all good things are exposed. It is the transition that insensibly takes place in the soul of the miser. There was a time when he prized money for the opportunities it brought within his power, but he has come to love the very gold pieces themselves. With him means have become ends. Or to turn to holy things—the brazen serpent, with all its sacred associations, was broken in pieces by King Hezekiah when he found that it had become an end instead of a means of worship. "Salt is good; but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill, but men cast it out" (Luke xiv. 34, 35). Still the abuse of a thing is no argument against its use. "*Salt is good.*"

[1] Thus the Church distinctly teaches with regard to Christ's own ordinance, that, under special and unavoidable circumstances, a man may communicate *spiritually*, "although he do not receive the Sacrament with his mouth" (see Rubric).

who use it not, and they who use it not, condemn not them who use it." Untold harm is done by mutual carpings and bickerings in things "in their own nature indifferent."[1] If excessive ritual be carnal, carnal also are "envying, and strife, and divisions" (1 Cor. iii. 3). How the angels must mourn over the sight of the followers of the Lamb standing aloof from one another on the question of a little more or a little less ritual! How we shall look back hereafter with astonishment at the little things which kept us asunder upon earth! Cannot we now forecast those feelings, and "agreeing to differ" (if it must be so) join hands while we say, "How good and joyful a thing it is, brethren, to dwell together in unity"! (Ps. cxxxiii. 1).

v.—*Among the Ministers of the Church there are bad men.*

The imputation here made must be sorrowfully admitted. There is no disguising the fact that there are to be found now, as at other times, false prophets, wolves in sheep's clothing, ministers of Christ by pro-

[1] "There is much ignorance prevailing among many people of easily excited passions about these things. There was a time when for a clergyman to stand up in a surplice in a pulpit was a signal for half the congregation to rise from their places and leave the church, as though that white and comely garment, which is the only recognized vestment in all Church ministrations, were a rag of Popery. That is mere intolerance and ignorance, and no reasonable man ought to be under the influence of such a panic feeling. The fact is, that all this narrow intolerance is almost as great a bane to the Church of England as the excesses of a superstitious ritualism."—The Bishop of Manchester, *Guardian*, December 3rd, 1873.

fession and yet neglectful of their high calling, men who love this present world, hirelings who care not for the sheep. From time to time we are shocked and grieved at some revelation of heinous sin in a court of law, and occasion is given to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme.

All this must be admitted. But we must not shut our eyes to the marvellous kindling of spiritual life during the last quarter of a century, at least, in the ranks of the ministers of the Church of England. Everywhere men are devoting their strength, their substance, their lives to the service of God. Everywhere they are rising to the high conception of their office, regarding themselves as ministers and stewards of God's mysteries, ambassadors for Christ, workers together with Him (2 Cor. v. 20, vi. 1), made by the Holy Ghost overseers of the flock to feed the Church of God (Acts xx. 28), and as they that must give account for the souls committed to their charge (Heb. xiii. 17). Thankfully must we all recognize this great outpouring of God's Holy Spirit on the clergy of the Church of England. To Him be all the praise! Still the naked fact remains that amongst its ministers are bad men; the fact remains, and where it exists it has alienated not a few earnest Christians from the Church of their Baptism.

I. The first question that calls for an answer is, *Do we discover in Holy Scripture any such feature in the Church of Christ at the beginning?*

Take the first twelve whom our Lord ordained: "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" (John vi. 70.) There can be no question that

in that little band of Christ's own ministers one was a bad man.

The same is true of the Church of the Apostles—Demas (2 Tim. iv. 10), Diotrephes (3 John 9), and Nicholas (if we accept the tradition that the deacon of that name was the leader of the sect of the Nicolaitanes) are instances in point.

But our Lord Himself has contrasted the good and the evil minister. "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord hath made *ruler over His household* . . . . Blessed is that servant . . . But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth His coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the Lord of that servant shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites" (Matt. xxiv. 45—51). Here it is evident that a servant was appointed ruler over God's household, and yet he was an evil servant.

The conclusion, then, at which we arrive is, that if there be this evil in the Church now, it is an evil that no less is to be found in the Church at the beginning.

II. *Is it then a justification for leaving the Church?* It would be sufficient to quote our Lord's own words respecting the authorized Jewish teachers. It was not that there were isolated cases of evil men amongst them, but rather that the whole body was corrupt. Priest and scribe and Pharisee were again and again denounced by our Lord for their false, hypocritical lives (Matt. xxiii.). Surely, then, if ever there was cause, there is cause here to justify the renunciation of

authority. So far from this, by precept and by example our Lord inculcates the very opposite. He draws a marked distinction between the authority of their *office*, which was from God, and the hypocrisy of their *lives*. "The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not" (Matt. xxiii. 2, 3).

But all doubt on this point is removed, if we look once more at the case of Judas Iscariot. It cannot be maintained that when he was chosen he was presumably good, for "Jesus knew from the beginning who should betray Him" (John vi. 64). It cannot be maintained that the life of Judas was upright till that final act of treachery, for we are told previously that he kept the bag, and was a thief (John xii. 6). And all this was open to our Lord, Who knew what was in man, and needed not that any should testify of him. So that, at the last, reading his dread purpose, He used the significant words, "that thou doest, do quickly" (John xiii. 27). And that man went to his own place (Acts i. 25), and we are told it had been good for him had he not been born (Matt. xxvi. 24).

So that Judas was evil, Judas was chosen, Judas was lost. Notwithstanding all this, at every stage we behold him acting under authority. He goes out with the missionary expedition on which the twelve were sent (Luke ix. 1, 2). Never once does our Lord warn men against his ministry. Do we not in this also see the same marked distinction between the *authority* of the minister and his own merits or demerits?

If this law be true, then the fact that there are evil

ministers in the Church of England can afford no justification for renouncing their authority, for that authority is of God. Wherever there is this trial of our faith, the Lord will make a way to escape, but that way cannot be what His Word forbids. Rather pray, and then be content to "tarry the Lord's leisure."

III. It only remains for us to inquire *whether the ministerial acts of such men can be valid, whether the Sacraments they administer can be effectual.*

The first principle we take up from Holy Scripture is that there are certain *gifts* of the Spirit which must be distinguished from the *fruit* of the Spirit.

The gifts of the Spirit were *ministerial*, and included such supernatural powers as the working of miracles and prophecy (1 Cor. xii. 8—10). The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance (Gal. v. 22). These constitute *personal* holiness, and proceed from the sanctifying influence of the indwelling Spirit. They are the peaceable fruits of righteousness.

Now we find that God invested certain with the former who were utterly destitute of the latter.

Take the case of Balaam. Wicked as that prophet was, God suffered him to exercise the gift of prophecy, the *gift* of the Holy Spirit. No one will deny that Balaam was wicked; yet no one will deny that Balaam was a prophet.

Again, if in the crucifixion of our Lord one figure stands out more prominent than all the rest in its dark malignity, it is that of Caiaphas, the high priest. Notwithstanding, that man utters a notable prophecy;

and that it was not attributable to any personal holiness but to his sacred office is emphatically stated: "One of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. *And this spake he not of himself: but, being high priest that year, he prophesied* that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad" (John xi. 49—52).

Once more we return to Judas Iscariot. He enjoys equal power with the eleven. He goes out with the rest, two and two. He with them "received power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases" (Luke ix. 1). Nay, even after his miserable end, St. Peter does not scruple to assert, "He was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry" (Acts i. 17).

The irresistible conclusion that is forced upon us is that God suffers evil men to exercise high ministerial powers. Their work is recognized when they themselves will be rejected. Our Lord points to such when He uses those remarkable words, "Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy Name (here He would seem to glance at Balaam), and in Thy Name have cast out devils (here to Judas)? . . . . Then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me ye that work iniquity" (Matt. vii. 22,-23).

If we seek for the reason of this we find it in St.

Paul's words, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us" (2 Cor. iv. 7). If such power had been bestowed only on the worthy, then men would have ascribed the glory not to God but to His minister. Even as it was, holy men of old had often to repudiate on their own behalf the honour due unto God. St. Peter, when he saw the people greatly wondering at the cure wrought in the lame man, exclaimed, "Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, *as though by our own power and holiness* we had made this man to walk? . . . . . His Name, through faith in His Name, hath made this man strong" (Acts iii. 12, 16). And in like manner St. Paul, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase" (1 Cor. iii. 6, 7). And again, "Such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God" (2 Cor. iii. 4, 5).

We cannot doubt, therefore, that the validity of the acts of such ministers is independent of their own merits. In the words of the 26th Article, "*Although in the visible Church the evil be ever mingled with the good, and sometimes the evil have chief authority in the ministration of the Word and Sacraments, yet forasmuch as they do not the same in their own name, but in Christ's, and do minister by His commission and authority, we may use their ministry, both in hearing the Word of God, and in receiving of the Sacraments.*

Neither is the effect of Christ's ordinance taken away by their wickedness, nor the grace of God's gifts diminished from such as by faith and rightly do receive the Sacraments ministered unto them; which be effectual, because of Christ's institution and promise, although they be ministered by evil men."

And yet, while maintaining this, all true Christians will deeply lament the lives of such ministers. Where this evil exists, the churches stand empty, and men abhor the offering of the Lord. He is crucified afresh, and put to an open shame. It cannot but be a great sorrow to all who love their Lord. We have all need to pray—

> "Endue Thy ministers with righteousness;
> And make Thy chosen people joyful."

PART III.

PLEAS COMMONLY URGED IN BEHALF OF DISSENT, EXAMINED.

i.—*Of what consequence is the ordination of man, provided there be the ordination of God?*

IT does not fall within the scope of the present inquiry to meet the objection of those who deny that there is any distinctive order of ministers under the Christian Dispensation. They rest their case on the Scripture that says that Jesus Christ "hath made us kings and priests unto God" (Rev. i. 6)—a Scripture that has manifest reference to all Christians. It is sufficient, however, to point out that the objection, if it be fatal as against the *priestly*, is no less fatal against the *kingly* office. The objectors would also have to reconcile the parallel assertion under the Old Dispensation (Ex. xix. 6), with the undisputed existence of a ministerial order. It is evident that the true meaning of this Scripture is, that there are regal and priestly powers vested in the Christian Church as a whole, though administered by authorized members of it. Whenever such powers are exercised it is a *corporate* act, and in this sense all are "kings and priests," or,

speaking collectively, the Church of Christ is "a royal priesthood" (1 Pet. ii. 9). Thus, to take a familiar illustration, we are wont to say of a Member of the Houses of Parliament, "he is one of our rulers;" our meaning is not that he has a *personal* power of ruling in this land, but a *corporate*.

But it is another issue that is raised in the words at the head of this chapter. The existence of a ministerial order is admitted; the only question is as to ordination. And in effect it comes to this, whether an inward conviction of a call from God to minister in the congregation can *dispense* with the necessity of an external commission from some lawful authority.

If this inward conviction be alone sufficient, then every earnest-minded Dissenting preacher must be received by us as God's acknowledged minister. If, on the other hand, over and above the inward call, the office must be visibly committed to him by lawful authority, then every such self-styled minister can only be regarded as unauthorized—as one who enters not by the door, but climbs up some other way.

Nor is this all-important question to be settled by adroitly placing in contrast the ordination of God against the ordination of man, as if they were separable. It is easy to say that the outward form, the human element, is nothing, provided the heart be right with God. But let us answer this by putting another case.

Suppose two religious persons wished to be married, and were to reason after the same manner: "There is no need to go to church, we will just kneel down and ask God to bless our union. The *form* is nothing.

So long as God's blessing is asked, it cannot matter about man's part, or whether it is done in church or not." Well, they would say they were married, they would try to believe it. Still we cannot but think that those two persons would very often have a misgiving starting up in their minds as to whether man's part was thus unimportant. "Can we be living in sin? Would it not have been safer to have sought God's blessing in the regular way?"

We say, then, that the question of ordination cannot be thus settled. The real answer to this, as to all other disputed questions, will be found in the Bible. Not, then, what saith our own heart? but "what saith the Scripture"? The voice within us may not be from above. The Voice that speaks from those pages is, beyond controversy, the Voice of the Living God.

Let it be our part, then, to inquire from Holy Scripture—

I. *What was the nature of the Christian ministry in the beginning?*

II. *How did God provide for the succession to it?*

I. To begin with the first of these inquiries.

It must be admitted, at the outset, that the Church of England, and indeed the whole Church of Christ for the first 1500 years, read Scripture in one light, while the Dissenting bodies have, almost without exception, read it in another. The Church discovers three orders or degrees in the ministry, while Dissenters insist upon the principle of absolute equality.

Antecedently, it will be confessed that we are justified in looking for some such gradations. Any one who

seeks to learn the invisible things of God from the things that are made (Rom. i. 20), will perceive that *subordination* is a principle in the economy of nature. God's creation is not framed upon the principle of equality. Go forth into the night, and you must confess that "one star differeth from another star in glory" (1 Cor. xv. 41). But turn to God's Holy Word, and where the veil is drawn aside gaze on His glory in heaven. Those ministers of His that do His pleasure (Ps. ciii. 21), are they all equal? Are there not cherubim and seraphim? (Isa. vi. 2). Are there not angels and archangels amid the company of heaven? (1 Thess. iv. 16).

Antecedently, then, we should have looked for degrees in the Christian ministry; and we boldly affirm that this anticipation is realized. In the Jewish ministry, which was a type of the Christian, being "a shadow of good things to come," we find three distinct orders. Over all was God's High Priest; and subordinated to him were the Priests, and beneath them the Levites. But when in the fulness of time God sent forth His Son, then the shadows gave way to the substance, the types to their fulfilment. Christ was the Great High Priest of the New Dispensation (Heb. viii. 1), the Messenger of the New Covenant (Mal. iii. 1).

Now, let it be observed that our Lord established a Christian ministry, corresponding in its three orders to that of the Jewish Dispensation. So long as He Himself was upon earth, He took to Himself the highest order. In due course He instituted the second order. "It came to pass in those days, that He went

out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, He called unto Him His disciples: and of them He chose twelve, whom also He named Apostles" (Luke vi. 12, 13). We may note, in passing, the solemn preparation for that act of ordination. After awhile we come upon the institution of a third order: "After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also" (Luke x. 1). Here, then, corresponding to the High Priest, Priests, and Levites, were our Lord, the twelve Apostles, and the Seventy.

We watch with interest that which happened upon our Lord's death and resurrection. There were yet forty days before His ascension, and we are told (Acts i. 3) that during those forty days He was "speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." We know from the use of the term "kingdom of God" elsewhere (see Matt. xiii.) that it has reference to God's kingdom on earth, or the Christian Church. Much that the Apostles subsequently instituted must be referred to the instructions they received at this time. But it is with the history of the Christian ministry that we are immediately concerned. Our Lord is about to be withdrawn in His visible presence from that Church, and the highest order in the visible ministry would be vacated. But the Lord provides for this. "Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus, and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when He had so said, He showed unto them His hands and His side. Then

were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you; *as my Father hath sent Me, even so send I you.* And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained" (John xx. 19—23). It was a solemn act of re-ordination; it was a change of office. The office in His Church which the Lord had held He commits to the Apostles: "As the Father hath sent Me, so send I you." As Jeremy Taylor observes, "He gave them the same authority which He had received from His Father, and they were 'the faithful and wise stewards, whom the Lord made rulers over His household.'" And Bishop Beveridge, "The form of which ordination is set down (John xx. 21, 22). Whereby He certifies them, that whatsoever power He had received from the Father for the instruction and government of His Church, He now left the same with them."

The highest order in the ministry being thus committed to the Apostles, another order is thereby left vacant. But not for long; for very early in the history of the Church we hear of the ordination of the Deacons. Seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, were selected, "whom they set before the Apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them" (Acts vi. 6).

It is evident that this was an *order* of the ministry, for not only are we told that Stephen, one of the Deacons, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people (Acts vi. 8), but

Philip, another, preached and baptized (Acts viii. 5, 35, 38); also the office was committed to them by that solemn act of ordination, the laying on of hands. Nor was it merely a temporary office, but a permanent order in the Church. More than thirty years afterwards, St. Paul writes to Timothy, "Let the Deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well;" and he adds, in words that plainly indicate that it might be regarded as a stepping-stone to a higher grade, "for they that have used the office of a Deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. iii. 12, 13, and Phil. i. 1).

With the rapid growth of the Christian Church it became evident that orders which had hitherto been limited in number could be limited no longer. We cease to hear of the Twelve and the Seventy, numbers which at their institution had evident reference to the twelve tribes of Israel, and the seventy elders among the Jews (Num. i. 16, xi. 16, 17). St. Matthias, St. Paul, and St. Barnabas are added to the Apostolic order; while the ministers of the second order are no longer distinguished as of old by its number, but are styled Elders, or in the Greek *Presbyters*, that word being, in its contracted form, our word *Priest*.

So that there were these three orders: the Apostolic, the Elders or Priests, and the Deacons.

The next stage in the development of the Christian ministry is the assignment of spheres of labour (see Gal. ii. 9). It is evident, from the prominence given to St. James at Jerusalem, that the old tradition is true

that he was its first Bishop. It is St. James, not St. Peter, who pronounces the decision after the council (Acts xv. 13). When St. Paul went up to Jerusalem, he is careful to relate that he found James there (Gal. i. 19, ii. 9). St. Luke also makes significant, because solitary, mention of St. James on that last visit to the Holy City (Acts xxi. 18). Thus too we find that Timothy was appointed the first Bishop of the Church of the Ephesians (see postscript to 2 Tim. and 1 Tim. i. 3), while Titus was placed in a like position over the Church of Crete (see postscript to the Ep. and i. 5).

Thus far the Holy Scriptures take us. The ranks of the Apostolic order were already thinned by martyrdom. With all "the time of their departure was at hand." Other men, such as Timothy and Titus, were entering into their labours. We can well understand why to these should not have been continued the name of Apostle, though called to the Apostolic order. But the three orders remained, and "a threefold cord is not quickly broken." To quibble about *names* is to raise a false issue. The *facts* are incontestable; there have been ever three orders in the Church of Christ, and the power of ordination, as shall be shown, was vested in the first of these orders. The title of "Apostle" seemed specially to belong to those who saw the Lord Jesus Christ.[1] Another title was sought

[1] Our Lord "chose twelve, whom also he named Apostles" (Luke vi. 13). But in addition to the Twelve, Matthias, Paul, and Barnabas are styled Apostles in Holy Scripture. It was a necessary qualification in the first election to the vacant Apostleship that the candidates should have companied with the dis-

for the successors of the Apostles, and what title so fitting as *Bishop*, or overseer? It expresses the work of the office; it recalls to us the first succession, when it was said, "His bishopric let another take" (Acts i. 20); and, finally, it is sanctified by having been a title of Him who is "the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls" (1 Peter ii. 25).[1]

ciples "all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among them . . . to be a witness of His Resurrection" (Acts i. 21, 22). St. Barnabas had probably fulfilled this condition, for, according to the Clementine Homilies, he was a disciple of the Lord Jesus. While in S. Paul's case we have his own testimony, "Am I not an Apostle? . . . Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?" (1 Cor. ix. 1). These qualifications, of having seen the Lord Jesus, and of bearing personal witness to His resurrection, necessarily came to an end with the Apostles. What was special to the æra of their work ceased. What was inherent in their office as the spiritual heads of Christ's Church was continued to their successors.

[1] The promiscuous use of "Bishop" in the Pastoral Epistles does not affect the main issue that there was an *order* of the ministry above that of the Presbyters. It is conceivable, by way of parallel, that the title of "General" should at one time be applied indiscriminately to the commanders of divisions, and yet at another have special reference to the commander-in-chief. It could never be argued from this that the direction of armies is in the hands of a number of officers of equal rank. The facts of the case would always outweigh any ambiguous use of a term. In like manner the title of Bishop, though no doubt including Presbyters in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, was shortly afterwards limited to the spiritual head of a diocese. Such unquestionably was the position occupied by Timothy at Ephesus and Titus in Crete. They were not on the same level as the Presbyters. How should they be when they were to ordain them first and govern them afterwards? Besides, it rested with them to judge in the first instance who were fit to be Presbyters at all. In the powers that they exercise they belong to the Apostolic order. This is the question we have to

Before closing this branch of our subject, let us glance at the powers of the Bishop over the Church committed to his charge. It has been forcibly remarked[1] that the Epistles to Timothy and Titus must be erased from the Bible before the episcopal order can be separated from the Church. From these sources we glean the nature of the Bishop's authority.

Briefly summarized, they are as follows :—

1. Control over the doctrines taught (1 Tim. i. 3, 4 ; Tit. i. 13), and the Church generally (Tit. ii. 15).

2. Control over the Deacons (1 Tim. iii. 12, 13).

3. Control over the Elders or Presbyters (1 Tim. v. 1, 19). [That there were many at Ephesus we learn from Acts xx. 17—36.]

4. Power of excommunication (Tit. iii. 10).

5. Authority to ordain (1 Tim. v. 22 ; Tit. i. 5).

Finally, in the words of Bishop Harold Browne, "We conclude with Hooker, 'If anything in the Church's government, surely the first institution of Bishops was

determine,—a question of *fact*, and not to suffer ourselves to be misled by the variations of meaning to which all language is liable.

[It need scarcely be pointed out that there is no correspondence between the position of Timothy and Titus and that of the annually-elected president of a religious denomination.]

Nor is this position shaken by S. Peter's admission (1 Pet. v. 1), "the elders (*Presbyters*) which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder (*co-Presbyter*)." No one will question his Apostleship. No one will maintain that every Presbyter was also an Apostle. The obvious explanation is, that one who was advanced to a higher order did not vacate the lower. The principle was not *substitution*, but *accumulation*.

[1] Dean Boyd's "Sermon on Episcopacy," to which the writer is greatly indebted for much of the foregoing argument.

from Heaven, even of God;' and with Bishop Hall, 'What inevitable necessity may do, we now dispute not,' yet 'for the main substance' episcopacy 'is utterly indispensable, and must so continue to the world's end.'"[1]

II. We are now arrived at the second portion of our subject, and we proceed to inquire, *How did God provide for the succession to the sacred ministry of His Church?*

We have already taken note that a succession was contemplated, for on the occasion of the first gap, that of Judas, it is said, "His bishopric let another take" (Acts i. 20).

We have seen that whilst our Lord was upon earth He alone ordained (Matt. x.; Luke x.; John xx.).

We have seen that in the early Church, with the two exceptions of St. Matthias (Acts i. 26) and St. Paul (Gal. i. 1), who were constituted to the Apostleship by Christ Himself, it was ever the first of the three orders that exercised the power of ordination. The Apostles ordained the seven Deacons (Acts vi. 6); Paul and Barnabas in their missionary journeys ordained them Elders in every Church (Acts xiv. 23). Paul ordained Timothy, and thus puts him in remembrance, "Stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of *my* hands" (2 Tim. i. 6). It would seem, however, that in this case the Presbyters or Elders were associated with the Apostle, for he adds (1 Tim. iv. 14), "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." The Church of England and the whole

[1] "Articles," p. 568.

Western Church accordingly follow this Scripture precedent, and associate the Priests in the laying on of hands at the ordination of Priests. Still, it is none the less true, that neither in the Bible nor in the primitive Church is there any example of ordination ever being entrusted to Presbyters only.[1] Again, the instructions to Timothy and Titus admit of no dispute that to them, in their episcopal office, this authority was committed. Taking, then, the whole evidence of Scripture, it is manifest that the authority was vested in the first of the three orders.

It is on these grounds that the Church of England, in the preface to her Ordination Service, confidently asserts, "*It is evident unto all men diligently reading the Holy Scripture and ancient authors, that from the Apostles' time there have been these orders of ministers in Christ's Church: Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. . . . . No man shall be accounted or taken to be a lawful Bishop, Priest, or Deacon in the Church of England, or suffered to execute any of the said functions, except he be called, tried, examined, and admitted thereunto, according to the form hereafter following, or hath had formerly episcopal consecration, or ordination.*"

Here it is expressly laid down that none are to be regarded as ministers unless they be episcopally ordained or consecrated. Accordingly a Dissenting minister must be ordained by a Bishop before he can be admitted to minister in the Church of England; but those holding orders in the Greek or Roman Churches, when received into the Church of England, are acknowledged as ministers without re-ordination.

[1] H. Browne, "Articles," p. 553.

This, as we have seen, is true to God's Word, which represents the highest order of the clergy, or the Bishops, as alone invested with authority to ordain. Orders received through them we recognize; a ministerial office otherwise derived has no Scriptural authority. Consequently inasmuch as those in Holy Orders are disqualified by the law of this realm from sitting in the House of Commons, a clergyman cannot be a member of that House, whereas Dissenting ministers can and do hold that position.

It is scarcely necessary to point out, for it is a natural consequence of this principle of episcopal ordination, that although the *Divine call* is to the applicant for Holy Orders, there is a power of *choice* in those who have authority to ordain. Timothy is instructed "to lay hands suddenly on no man" (1 Tim. v. 22); he is to exercise a wise discretion in making choice of fit persons to serve in the sacred ministry of the Church. Emphatically, too, did our Lord enforce upon the Apostles that the choice was from Himself: "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you" (John xv. 16).

A man may present himself full of heaven-born zeal, saying, "Here am I, send me," but he will await the authority to act. "How shall they preach, *except they be sent?*" (Rom. x. 15). And again, "No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not Himself to be made an high priest; but He that said unto Him, Thou art My Son, to-day have I begotten Thee" (Heb. v. 4, 5). Accordingly, Aaron was solemnly invested with his priestly office (Ex. xxix. 4—9), while

Christ Himself went not forth to His ministry till the Holy Spirit visibly descended upon Him from the open heavens, and the Voice proclaimed His mission (Matt. iii. 16). What an example He has left us thus "to fulfil all righteousness"!

By precept, therefore, and by example, the Lord provided for the succession to the sacred ministry of His Church. This authority He has transmitted down the line of the highest of those three orders which He appointed. Is there any Scriptural authority, any ground in reason for supposing that there can be any other way? Is there no warning in the words, "Verily verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber" (John x. 1). Christ is that door. *His* Word, *His* laws, *His* example, which we have been considering, show us *how* we are to enter into the sheepfold.

Can it be, then, *safe* to attend the ministrations of one who has not thus entered by the door? Grant he is a good and earnest man, but can it alter the Word of God? Can it open another way? Can it supply the *authority* to minister Christ's Word and Sacraments? If such an one be asked for his authority, it will be answered that he received his office from ministers in his own communion. But how came *they* by it? It may be from those before them; but sooner or later you will come to a missing link—the gap that separates that ministry from the ministry ordained by Christ. Can that link be supplied? Can that gap be bridged? That is the question. What can redeem that later ministry from being new, and

therefore unauthorized? Ask yourself, How came the first in that new line by his office? There can be but one answer, "*He took it.*" He took it to raise up a ministry to teach his own views. If it was open to him to *take* it, then any one may take it. What hopeless confusion this would create! But what saith the Scripture? "No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron."

And this mention of Aaron brings us to a further point. Aaron was called of God: Aaron's sons succeeded him. God reserved this high office for the line of Aaron. None but those of the tribe of Levi could be Priests, none but the seed of Aaron a High Priest. It went down from father to son, from generation to generation.

We should scarcely look to find any one so presumptuous as to take this office upon himself. Nevertheless, as we cannot doubt for our learning, this thing occurred and is placed on record. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram claimed it though out of the regular line —they claimed the Priesthood.[1] What was God's answer to that claim? Why, the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up and all their company (Num. xvi.).

It may, however, occur to some to think that, after all, these things belonged to the Jewish Dispensation, and have no bearing on the Christian. But we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that in the New Testament special mention is made of the sin of these men.

[1] They were a subordinate order of the ministry, being Levites. What shall we say of those who in these days have not even this plea to advance?

St. Jude (ver. 11) warns us against the fate of those who "perished in the gainsaying of Core," *i.e.*, in this opposition of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram to the ordained ministry of God.

We cannot conclude without quoting the words of John Wesley. They need no comment beyond saying that they constitute his settled and final conviction on this matter, as will be seen by a comparison of dates. They are taken from a sermon he preached at Cork, May 4, 1789, and published by him in the "Arminian Magazine" for 1790. He died, aged eighty-eight, on March 2, 1791:—

"I wish all of you who are vulgarly termed Methodists would seriously consider what has been said, and particularly you whom God has commissioned to call sinners to repentance. It does by no means follow from hence that ye are commissioned to Baptize, or to administer the Lord's Supper. Ye never dreamed of this, for ten or twenty years after ye began to preach. Ye did not then, like Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, seek the priesthood also. Ye knew that 'No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.' O contain yourselves within your own bounds. Be content with preaching the Gospel. Do the work of evangelists. Proclaim to all the world the lovingkindness of God our Saviour; declare to all, The kingdom of heaven is at hand: repent ye, and believe the Gospel. I earnestly advise you, abide in your place; keep your own station. Ye were, fifty years ago, those of you that were then Methodist preachers, extraordinary messengers of God, not going in your own will, but thrust out, not

to supersede, but to provoke to jealousy the ordinary messengers. In God's name, stop there!"

"Christ is gone up; yet ere He passed
From earth, in heaven to reign,
He formed one holy Church to last
Till He should come again.

"His Twelve Apostles first He made
His ministers of grace;
And they their hands on others laid,
To fill in turn their place.

"So age by age, and year by year,
His grace was handed on;
And still the holy Church is here,
Although her Lord is gone.

"Let those find pardon, Lord, from Thee,
Whose love to her is cold:
Bring wanderers in, and let there be
One Shepherd and one fold."—NEALE.

ii.—*Christ is preached at the Chapel.*

This plea is substantially the same as that the Gospel, or the Truth, or the Word is preached at the chapel. It is a claim advanced by each denomination in turn that it holds God's truth as set forth in His Holy Word. But when we bear in mind the numerous forms of faith that are professed by the Christian denominations, it must be evident that *all* cannot be the truth. The way of truth is single. Nor do we conceal that this very variety of teaching renders us mistrustful. We recall our Lord's warning, "Take heed that ye be not deceived: many shall come in My

name, saying, I am Christ; . . . . go ye not therefore after them" (Luke xxi. 8; Matt. xxiv. 23, 24).

This confusion of tongues is too like the building of the Tower of Babel (the type of dissension) rather than the Temple of Zion (the type of Christ's Church), where there was "neither hammer, nor axe, nor any tool of iron, heard in the house, while it was in building" (1 Kings vi. 7); "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace" (1 Cor. xiv. 33).

St. Paul's counsel is therefore specially incumbent on Christians at such a time as this. "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves" (2 Cor. xiii. 5).

We would therefore suggest one or two Scriptural tests of the truth—tests of which we believe the Church of England will stand the application.

We do not ask, Is *false* doctrine taught? because it must be assumed that every conscientious person is fully persuaded in his own mind of the truth of that form of Christianity which he adopts.

Let us then pass to other tests.

(1) Is it a *defective* preaching of Christ?

St. Paul expressly warns the Corinthian teachers that even though the foundation of their teaching be laid in Jesus Christ, yet "let every man take heed *how* he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is"

(1 Cor. iii. 10—13). It would seem, then, that even preaching Christ admits of infinite variety—some of it so worthless that it will perish, like wood, hay, stubble, in the fire, when put to the test.

But, we shall be asked, Can we point to the case of a really earnest man who studied his Bible and yet fell short of the truth? It so happens that we have such a case in Apollos. He was an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures. "This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. And be began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly" (Acts xviii. 25, 26).

Let us not lose the significance of this. He knew the baptism or teaching of John. We are not left in doubt as to what this was. "John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus" (Acts xix. 4). Apollos, then, "taught diligently the things of the Lord;" he, like John, pointed to Christ as to "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (John i. 29); he gave "knowledge of salvation unto His people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God" (Luke i. 77, 78). And yet we marvel to find that a man, who knew and taught all this, had need to be instructed *more perfectly*. We suppose that they expounded unto him not only the inestimable benefit of the redemption of the world

by our Lord Jesus Christ (which he knew already), but also the ordinances which He left for His Church, and the whole body of Christian truth which He taught, and which is therefore "the truth as it is in Jesus."

The lesson for us is plain. The Bible is a large book, and no man teaches "all the counsel of God" who teaches anything short of that. Not one jot or one tittle of those Scriptures can fail of its fulfilment. Woe to the man who takes from the words of that book (Rev. xxii. 19; Deut. iv. 2, xii. 32). Even Luther so far forgot the reverence due to the Word of God as to call the Epistle of St. James "an epistle of straw," though he deeply regretted it afterwards.

Christian ministers, if they would teach "all the counsel of God" and the "truth as it is in Jesus," must strive to teach *all* that God has revealed to us in His Word. They must lay the foundation in Jesus Christ, and then follow the bidding of St. Paul, who says, "Leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment" (Heb. vi. 1, 2).

Therefore we ask, as the first test, Is the preaching of Christ to which you listen, when tried by the standard of Holy Scripture, in any way *defective?*

It may be that you are conscious of some omissions, but you say they are unimportant. But what should we say of a chemist who, in making up a medicine,

departed from the doctor's prescription and omitted some of the drugs? We should not be surprised if the remedy failed, or the cure was only partial. Let us not, therefore, in God's truth assume any omissions to be unimportant. We must hold the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

At the same time we must not be understood to say that all truths are of equal importance. There is nothing in the Bible to warrant such an opinion. There are "weightier matters of the law." There are great central truths on which all else hinges. In Jesus Christ and Him crucified we behold the great central truth of Holy Writ, veiled, it may be, in the Old Testament, but revealed in the New. And subservient to this and dependent on this, as the heavenly bodies about the sun, are all the articles of the Christian faith. But what should we say of one who, professing to describe the heavenly system, were to begin and end his treatise with the sun? Wonderful, pre-eminent, the source of all light, is that glorious work of God's hand. But "*He made the stars also.*" While the sun rules the day, the stars, though there, have their light blenched by its exceeding glory. But do they serve no wise purpose? Ask the mariner, and he will tell you that when the sky was overcast and the sun hid his light, there came a rift in the clouds, and the stars shone out and showed him his course over the great deep. Ask the prisoner who never sees the sun, but has watched the solitary star rise between his dungeon bars with its message of hope. It is even said that those who look up into the sky from the bowels of the earth, or out of the trough of the mighty

waters, can see the stars prick out even though the sun be shining overhead.

These things are an allegory. There are times when men even lose all sense of the Sun of Righteousness, to whom it seems as though God had forsaken them. He no longer lifts up the light of His countenance upon them. It is at such a time that, as a solitary star in our darkness, some truth stands out which we had before deemed unimportant. A heart full of misgiving has ere now learnt from birds and flowers (Matt. vi. 28) the lesson of trust in God. Call these but glimmerings of hope, if you will, but "He made the stars also." Such stars light us through our night, till the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings.

Or it may be a condition of things where the sinner has through his sin parted with his sense of God and Christ. There is no fear of God before his eyes; an appeal to that name is powerless. His iniquities have separated between him and his God. That Sun is under an eclipse. And then, as in an eclipse, some star appears, before unseen. It may be very little according to our former estimate—some new light on a discarded text, or some new force in a slighted doctrine. The hardened criminal, whom no appeal could move, was melted, when they spoke to him of the touch of his mother's soft hand. All these lesser lights are God's: "He made the stars also." Every truth in the Bible, to the veriest jot and tittle, has its appointed place in the scheme of God's salvation for man.

(2) Secondly, is it *distorted* teaching?

There is an expression used by St. Paul full of instructive meaning. He urges those who prophesy (*i.e.*, preach) to prophesy *according to the proportion of faith* (Rom. xii. 6). In other words we are to teach not only *all* the doctrines taught in Holy Scripture, but to teach them in their *due proportion.* Only those who keep this principle in view will succeed "in rightly dividing" the Word of God.

Instead of this, how often we see a teacher select one doctrine and force it into undue prominence. One man takes Prophecy, another Predestination or Election, a third the second Advent of Christ, a fourth Adult Baptism. Like those divided Corinthians, every one has a doctrine or an interpretation (1 Cor. xiv. 26). Sunday after Sunday from their several pulpits scarce any other note is struck. What has become of the *proportion* of faith ?

What should we say if in a landscape painting some distant object was depicted with such distinctness as to stand out in the foreground, or some prominent object in the scene was painted so hazily as scarcely to catch the eye? We should say the perspective is faulty, the drawing out of proportion ; it distorts one object and omits another, and so wholly fails to represent the scene. Without hesitation we should reject such a picture. And this is precisely the case with religious teaching. Each doctrine must be there in the relative proportion which it occupies in the Bible, or God will reject the picture which we have drawn of His way of salvation. Doctrine thus distorted is, strictly speaking, called "*heresy.*" It is a Greek word (*hairesis*) meaning "choice." It is not, then, a false doctrine in

the sense of not being found in the Bible, but a true doctrine *chosen* out of many and forced into undue prominence. Its falsity lies not in *kind* but in *degree.* Thus the Church in her Litany asks to be delivered from false doctrine, *heresy*, and schism.

Now we believe that, tried by Holy Scripture, the teaching of the Church of England will be found neither defective nor distorted.

Very far are we from claiming for the ministers of the Church of England any immunity from error. As men they are equally liable to err as their fellow-men. They need the prayer, God knoweth, "that it may please Thee to illuminate all bishops, priests, and deacons with true knowledge and understanding of Thy Word."

Nor would we rest our case on the admitted fact that they are the most highly educated body of clergy in the world, though we are not blind to its importance when we recall St. Peter's words concerning the Epistles of St. Paul, "in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are *unlearned* and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction" (2 Pet. iii. 16). No one will undervalue an educated ministry with such a warning before him.

We base our confidence on the Church's system. Foreseeing the liability of human teachers to err, either in omitting God's truth, or in disturbing "the proportion of faith," she has, as far as possible, mapped out the Christian year, assigning a place to each doctrine, and also, as it were, measuring out its proportionate value.

The Church's year begins in Advent. The eyes of her children are turned to the coming of Christ. During four weeks they dwell upon the thought how He came down from heaven for us men and for our salvation. That coming they celebrate at Christmas. They then strive to realize not only the Godhead but the manhood of our Saviour, "very God, and very Man." Then step by step through the season of Epiphany (which means *manifestation*) the character of Jesus Christ is unfolded. Sunday by Sunday the great attributes gather round Him. At last, having formed a true conception of "what manner of man" this was, the note of coming sorrow is sounded in their ears, and they enter on the forty days of Lent. Very wisely are they counselled to bring home to their own selves by self-humiliation the sufferings which He endured for their sins. As He fasted forty days in the wilderness, so do they practise self-denial. They take up their cross, and follow the Man of Sorrows. During Holy Week, His hour being at hand, they are bidden to "watch with Him one hour;" till on the Friday they picture step by step the Cross and Passion, the precious Death and Burial. They keep it humbly as a day of bitter self-reproach that their sins should have needed such a sacrifice, but they scruple not to call it "Good Friday" for the blessings that their Lord then purchased for them. And so from Lenten sorrow they emerge on Easter joy. For the next forty days they live over again in contemplation the forty days He spent on earth after His Resurrection. On Holy Thursday, or Ascension Day, they stand with the disciples of old watching as He is received up into

heaven. After ten days they celebrate Whit-Sunday, or the Day of Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost, the promised Comforter, was given. After this they devote one day to the contemplation of the mystery of the holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, Three Persons and One God. They realize that each Person of the Godhead has taken to Himself a part in our salvation, and that these Three are One.

Having thus laid a good foundation for their faith, the Church proceeds to build upon it. So far the *Object of their faith* has been passed before them, and for the rest of the year they are invited to witness the *exercise* of that faith. Christian duties are seen in their true light, Christian promises in their full power. Till, thus occupied, with their eyes straining forward into the future, the Church's year begins anew, and the thought of Christ's Second Advent, as it were, overlaps and blends with the thought of the First.

This is surely to "rightly divide the word of Truth." This is to omit nothing, to transpose nothing ; to give to each doctrine its proper place and proportionate weight. Even if the minister fail, the Services preserve "the proportion of faith." It is, so far as any human system can secure it, the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

And how great is the power of such a preaching of the Gospel ! There are some who follow no such system, but claim to be ever preaching Christ, and yet but little fruit is brought to perfection. Is not the flaw easy of detection ? They have been preaching a *name*, and not *a person*, and this for lack of such a system as the Church supplies. They forget that "the

Gospel according to St. Matthew, and St. Mark, and St. Luke, and St. John" in each case proclaims the life and conversation of Jesus Christ, step by step, to those great final acts, the Death, the Resurrection, and the Ascension, while *they* have dwelt almost exclusively on the Death. From the lips of one who has followed the outline of this consecutive teaching the Name of Christ comes with a new power. Before, it was no more than a familiar *word*, now it is a *person*, "very Christ." A new light gathers round the Cross of Calvary which, in his mouth, had been so long a lifeless dogma. "*I know* whom I have believed," said St. Paul (2 Tim. i. 12), for "in knowledge of Him standeth our eternal life."

In supplying, therefore, a framework of consecutive teaching, the Church has but followed the structure of God's Word, and acted on her Lord's assurance, "This is life eternal, that they might *know* Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent" (John xvii. 3).

Probably Dissenting teachers are far more indebted to the Prayer-book for the completeness of their teaching than either they are aware of or care to admit. The round of the Church's seasons recalls to them also the several doctrines in the "proportion of faith."

It is a false shame that scorns to tread in the footprints of other men when it is thus written, "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein" (Jer. vi. 16.)

iii.—*We shall not be asked by God whether we are Churchmen or Dissenters, but whether we are converted.*

The position here taken up rests on at least two false assumptions.

I. That God's commands on the unity of His people are small matters, while conversion is a great matter; and provided we attain the latter He will be indifferent to any breach of the former.

The obvious retort is, if those commands be unimportant, to what end were they given?

It may be said, "There is only one way to heaven," but then is not "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" a sign-post to that way which cannot safely be disregarded?

But to examine the question more closely: can we discover from what is revealed of God's character any indifference even to the minutest detail?

Look at any one of the manifold works of the God of Nature. Magnify a thousandfold the foot of a fly, so designed as to walk on the ceiling, or the exquisite construction of the feathery snowflake so marvellously adapted to furnish a warm mantle to the earth. Watch the stars in their courses, or summer following winter and day giving place to night, and then say if God be not a God of order even to the minutest detail. He notes the fall of a sparrow to the ground and numbers the very hairs of our head. Is there any ground here for assuming that God is indifferent to the keeping of His own commandments? The Apostle tells us that it is open to us to read the character of God from His

created works, and if we shut our eyes to the lessons there taught us, then are we, "without excuse" (Rom. i. 20).

God's written Word confirms what we read in the Book of Nature. The Last Judgment will be marvellously minute. All Scripture goes to prove that. Every guilty wish, every motive, every thought of our heart is noted in His Book. To Him all hearts are open, from Him no secrets are hid. For all these things God will bring us into judgment. Well may we quail as we read the description of that day: "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the Day of Judgment" (Matt. xii. 36).

Place side by side these two pictures of the Last Judgment, and mark the contrast. "God will not ask us whether we are guilty of the sin of schism, but whether we are converted." Now hear the Word of the Lord, "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God: and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works" (Rev. xx. 12).

But we may be asked whether we would maintain that one, who had broken the unity of Christ's Church, will on that account be excluded from heaven.

That is not the question. The question is this, Are we free, while we are here on earth, to disregard a plain command of God, on the expectation of being able to plead our conversion when we stand before the great white throne? We contend that the only rule

for to-day's duties is perfect obedience to the law of God.

With regard to the future, we can believe that God is not extreme to mark what we do amiss; He will forgive those who, thinking they do Him service, do not scruple to make divisions in His Church. But it is plain it is a disturbance of God's design, it will require an adaptation of His law to the wilfulness of man. If from His Word and our own experience we learn anything, it is that His love goes beyond even the limits of His bounteous promises; the river of His mercy will rise and overflow its banks. But shall we sin that grace may abound?

In the tempest on the Sea of Galilee the ship in which the Master was asleep battled with the storm; and He arose and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And that calm fell also on "the other little ships," which St. Mark says were with Him (Mark iv. 36).

That ship with the Master in it has ever been regarded as a type of the Church, and it has been suggested that those "other little ships" may represent the denominations. And is it not true that both participate in the blessings of His holy presence? (*Archer Butler's Sermons.*)

Let this be granted, yet assuredly it were safer to keep the whole law and not to offend willingly even in one point. Only those who have set their feet on the Great Rock can look calmly on the flood surging beneath them. Others may have taken refuge on this or that detached fragment of the Rock, and as

yet the waterflood has not overflowed them. But is there no peril?

The habit of mind that fixes its gaze on the Last Judgment and anticipates its questions has at least one danger. It puts this earth in the far distance and dwarfs the proportions of the present. It is the ultimate self that will be scanned by a fierce light —what we are then, not what we are now.

It is true and it is false. True, so far as it maintains an increasing motive to living near to God, and "so much the more as we see the day approaching;" false, so far as it diminishes the sense of the responsibility of the present.

Perhaps the corrective is to be found in that ever present thought of the early Church—they looked for, they loved the Lord's appearing (2 Tim. iv. 8). That event, in their view, was not in the far distance; it might be "even at the doors." "The Lord is at hand," was the warning cry (Phil. iv. 5). Hence the desire to be found watching—the soldier at his post, the servant at his task. Hence the sense of the reality, the responsibility of the immediate present was strong upon them; and their desire, stronger far than ours, to obey in all things.

It comes to this. Can there be a better way to conversion, a shorter road to heaven, than strict obedience to the Word of God? Is there a better maxim by which to shape our course than "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments"? (Matt. xix. 17).

II. Secondly, the proposition before us rests on the false assumption that God gives us no other work to do but to save our own souls.

Such a motive, if it exists, is utterly unworthy of those who claim to follow the Lamb that was slain. *He* came down from heaven for us men and for our salvation. *He* laid down His life for His friends. He can look with little favour on a religion that takes no thought of the brethren, but hugs itself in the mantle of its selfishness, saying, So long as *I* get to heaven, it does not matter about the rest!

This was not the spirit of Moses, who prayed for Israel, saying, "Forgive their sins; and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written" (Exod. xxxii. 32).

This was not the spirit of St. Paul. "I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (Rom. ix. 3).

We who are members of one Body, children of one Father, soldiers in one army, servants of one Lord, are bound to take into consideration how our own course of action will affect the salvation of others.

Look at Christendom at this day.

There are builders of a spiritual temple, and the Great Master Builder would have no sound of hammer, or axe, or any tool of iron heard in the house while it is in building (1 Kings vi. 7). And lo! among the builders there is clamour and strife of tongues. It is Babel, not Zion.

There is a kingdom, and the King's Son is coming to receive it. Will He be satisfied with a kingdom divided against itself?

There is a mighty army, and it has been sent forth to conquer the world; but every man's hand is against

his brother, so that army has made but little advance. Will the great Captain keep silence?

There is a Saviour, and He came to teach the great lesson of love to a fallen world. And scoffers are saying that there is no strife so bitter as the strife of His followers. That Saviour is put to an open shame.

There is a Master who has prayed for unity among His disciples. He has called, but no man regarded.

There are souls wandering about, seeking rest and finding none, because in this Babel of tongues they are distracted. They were drawn by a rumour of a Gospel of peace, and instead of peace they find discord. Hear the despairing cry of the seeker after truth, "Who will show us any good?" Hear the sneer of the enemy, "See, how these Christians love one another!" Hear what God hears, the voice of the brother's blood crying from the ground. Will there be no inquisition for blood?

And yet men shut their eyes to all this, the result of religious division, and say, "We shall not be asked by God whether we are Churchmen or Dissenters, but whether we are converted!"

iv.—*I act according to my Conscience.*

This is a common plea, and one generally accepted as satisfactory. It seems to shift the responsibility from ourselves to God. It is as though we said, "I act according to the light which God has given me. If I err, I err by that light."

But let us inquire how far *He* has led us to look on conscience as an infallible guide.

Suppose we ask one who has a clock, "Is yours the right time?" and we are answered, "It so often plays me false that I am doubtful. Ever since that clock had a fall, I can never be quite sure of it." Well, that is just what has happened to our conscience, *it has had a fall.* Our nature fell when Adam sinned, and we inherit a *fallen* conscience. We cannot rely on it; it plays us false.

Let us turn to the Word of God. If there be anything laid down strongly there, it is that we may believe a thing to be right in our conscience, which is nevertheless fatally wrong. "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. xiv. 12). But it will be urged that the light within us is from God: "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord" (Prov. xx. 27). No doubt; but even light may be dimmed and obscured, and even quenched. "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" (Matt. vi. 23).

To take but one example, that of St. Paul. He was consenting to Stephen's death, he "beyond measure persecuted the Church of God and wasted it" (Acts viii. 1; Gal. i. 13), unquestionably believing that he did God service. He acted according to his conscience, and his conscience was wrong.

So when we hear people saying with great self-confidence that they make a schism in Christ's body, havoc of Christ's Church, because they think it right to do so, we cannot but recall Saul of Tarsus: "I verily thought with myself that I *ought* to do many

things contrary to the Name of Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts xxvi. 9).

But it will be pleaded in reply that, even assuming our conscience to be wrong at times, it can be no sin if we know no better.

Let us think this out soberly. The plea amounts to this, that there can be no such thing as a *sin of ignorance*. David did not think so: "Who can understand his errors? cleanse Thou me from *secret* faults" (Ps. xix. 12). Sins of ignorance there are, and in the Litany we pray God to forgive us our sins, negligences, and *ignorances*. The utmost we can say is that a sin of ignorance *may* not entail the same degree of guilt as a sin against light and knowledge. "That servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to His will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that *knew not*, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes" (Luke xii. 47, 48).

But why should ignorance be punished at all? Because often, probably always, our ignorance is due to our own fault. How otherwise do we account for the light in one man burning so much more clearly than in another? Thus to one acts, resorts, publications seem to be allowable, from which a truer servant of God would recoil instinctively. The one's conscience sees "no harm;" the other's "abstains from all appearance of evil" (1 Thess. v. 22). The conscience of the one "is defiled" (Tit. i. 15); the other "exercises himself to have always a conscience void of offence towards God" (Acts xxiv. 16).

Consequently we find that God does call man to

account for sins of ignorance. The Jews who killed the Prince of Life, though they did it "through ignorance," though "they knew not what they did" (Acts iii. 17; Luke xxiii. 34), yet suffered rejection. Because it knew not the time of its visitation (as it ought to have known) the doom went forth on the Holy City, the doom of sinful ignorance. "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes" (Luke xix. 42).

It is certain, then, that conscience by itself is no trustworthy guide. It must be regulated and instructed by some standard outside itself, and that standard is God's Word. Just as a clock, though useful to tell the time, must again and again be set to the sun, if it is to be a true guide; so must conscience be corrected again and again by God's written Word.

Let every one, then, be ready to admit an appeal from conscience to Holy Scripture. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding" (Prov. iii. 5). If Scripture says one thing and conscience another, it cannot be doubtful which is to give way. "Let God be true, but every man a liar" (Rom. iii. 4).

But in human nature there is not merely a *liability* to err, but an *inclination*. "Man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil" (Art. ix.). Therefore, if our conscience points in the direction of our own personal likings or our worldly interests, we shall do well to distrust it.

Before now ships have gone astray in mid-ocean and have struck upon the sunken reef; and then it has been discovered that the compass was at fault. A little crumb of metal had found its way into the case, and this drew the needle away from its attraction to the north.

May there not be a like influence at work in the conscience that approves of schism? Is it that in the Chapel community one has a position of importance, whereas in the Church he would be on a level with the rest? Is it, in the case of another, that the more exciting preaching, or less restraint of the worship, falls in with his tastes? Is it that the fear of offending, or the wish to please others has had its weight with a third? And the process can be wholly unconscious. The imputation of deliberately tampering with conscience would be honestly and justly repudiated. Nevertheless, there is a danger that such matters as these may prove to be, like that little crumb of metal, the disturbing influence that warps the conscience.

God's Word is the light unto our path (Ps. cxix. 105). God's Voice speaking to us from those pages will show us how far the voice within us is from Him.

The question for each one to answer is, Has there been a patient and sufficient study of that Word? Has there been an asking for the guidance of the Spirit of Truth? Has our own proneness to err been sufficiently borne in mind? If so, then may we humbly follow the leadings of our own conscience.

If, on the other hand, that Word of God awakens

any misgivings respecting schism, and it can hardly fail to do so, let us not treat it lightly. Let us remember that our own self-condemnation can be but a faint index to that of an all-seeing Judge: "For if our own heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things" (1 John iii. 20).

v.—*I was converted by a Dissenter.*

All true Christians will thankfully admit that, by the grace of God given to them, the Dissenting bodies have been instrumental in converting numbers to the Saviour. To say that not every one that claims to be converted is so, is to say what is as true of the ranks of Churchmen as of Dissenters. But amongst the latter there are numbers, thank God, whose lives are a sufficient testimony that they have been converted, and become as little children. By their fruits they are known—they bear that fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance (Gal. v. 22, 23).

But, if this be so, has not God set His seal to their ministry? If He does not withhold the increase from Dissent, surely He expresses approval of it?

In such reasoning there lurks a fallacy. Would the reader be prepared to apply it to Roman Catholics? God undoubtedly has had numbers of true servants in their ranks; are we prepared, however, to allow that He thereby expresses approval of their creed and system as a whole?

Is it not nearer the truth to say that wherever God's Holy Word is preached, wherever Christ is

lifted up as the Saviour, wherever there is earnest faith and instant prayer, there God gives the increase? Surely it is *in spite* of the divisions of Christians, and not in consequence of them, that these changed lives follow.

St. Paul was not rejoicing at contention, nor expressing approval of the opposition to his authority when he wrote to the Philippians, "Some, indeed, preach Christ, even of envy and strife, and some also of good will. . . . What then? *Notwithstanding*, every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice" (Phil. i. 15, 18).

On the same principles, all true Christians will hail with joy every conversion to God, in whatever denomination it may occur; but they will none the less bewail the schism in Christ's body.

From all that is good—from the Bible reading, the prayers, the praises—good must needs follow. From all that is evil in the system—the divisions, the mutual suspicion, the rivalry, the variance—nothing can result but evil: "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit" (Matt. vii. 18).

If these divisions amongst Christians give occasion to the Lord's enemies to blaspheme, if they put an offence in the path of weak or doubting Christians, if they cause that which is lame to go out of the way, if they produce soreness and irritation amongst those who are bidden to love as brethren, then *so far* the system is evil; *so far* no true Christian can rejoice over it. It is not enough to say that there ought to

be none of this soreness or irritation. It is the natural fruit; we can look for nothing else. Will dissension beget love, and division peace? "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" (Matt. vii. 16). Nor is it enough to point to conversions. That in spite of a system productive of variance, and an atmosphere of heat and controversy, souls should be converted and become as little children, and display such qualities as love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance, only serves to bring out in stronger contrast that which cometh of good, and that which cometh of evil.

A thoughtful and prayerful Dissenter will, therefore, consider his position. His change of heart he will ascribe to God, and under Him to His servant. He will feel it due to that servant always to entertain for him the most heart-felt love and gratitude. But he owes a duty to the Master, not to take part in or perpetuate schism, "for neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase" (1 Cor. iii. 7).

vi.—*I like a Change.*

It is not without reluctance that we admit this plea among those to be considered. These pages are addressed to earnest, inquiring Dissenters, and it is scarcely possible that such would allow themselves to justify their position on such a ground. It is a plea that entirely shuts out the thought of God and *His* will. Place it side by side with the motive-thought of the true child of God, and it is self-condemned:

"Lord, what wilt *Thou* have me to do?" "I like a change!"

It is, therefore, only because we believe it to lie at the root of many of the separations of Christians that we have ventured to include it among the pleas urged in behalf of Dissent.

It can scarcely be necessary to point out that one who would follow in his Saviour's footsteps must never decide any question on such an issue. To obey, not to choose; to follow, not to lead; God's will, not our own,—this is the Christian's law. For it was the Lord Jesus Christ's: "Father, not My will, but Thine be done."

We shall, therefore, only point out that this attitude of mind is one full of peril.

The chambers of such a soul are by its own confession untenanted. If so, they are "empty, swept, and garnished," awaiting the advent of spirits of error. Why are children so easy to deceive? Because as yet they have no settled views of truth. They are like ships without ballast, turned about with every side-wind, and so says St. Paul, "Be no more children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine" (Eph. iv. 14). There is something flattering to our self-esteem to be able to say, "I am not bigoted; I have laid aside the leading-strings of prejudice, and I move with the times; I like to hear what is to be said on all sides." It is pleasant to be thought liberal-minded. But there is a Book which speaks of a "Faith once (*literally*, once for all) delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). It is the faith of One Who changes not with the changing of the times, but is

"the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Will such a mind find such a faith? Will it not be "ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth?" (2 Tim. iii. 7). "Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel" (Gen. xlix. 4).

And minds so constituted rarely settle down to any definite belief. They are like the Athenians of old, who "spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing" (Acts xvii. 21). Though they listened to St. Paul's preaching, yet Christianity took no root among them. There never was a Church of Athens. It is an attitude of mind that unfits men to receive the old, old story of the Gospel. It cannot endure sound doctrine. In St. Paul's words, "They heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Tim. iv. 3, 4).

But in these, the last times, there is a special danger. What a warning have the Master's words for those who "like a change"!

"What shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many . . . . Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before" (Matt. xxiv. 3, 4, 5, 23, 24, 25).

PRAYERS FOR UNITY.

O GOD the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our only Saviour, the Prince of Peace; give us grace seriously to lay to heart the great dangers we are in by our unhappy divisions. Take away all hatred and prejudice, and whatsoever else may hinder us from godly union and concord: that, as there is but one body, and one spirit, and one hope of our calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, so we may henceforth be all of one heart, and of one soul, united in one holy bond of truth and peace, of faith and charity, and may with one mind, and one mouth glorify Thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. —(*Service for the Queen's Accession.*)

Almighty and Everlasting God, we beseech Thee to inspire continually the Universal Church with the Spirit of Truth, Unity, and Concord, that all they that do confess Thy Holy Name may agree in the truth of Thy Holy Word, and live in unity and godly love: grant this, O Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our only Mediator and Advocate. Amen.—(*From the Prayer for the Church Militant.*)

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OUR FATHER WHICH ART IN HEAVEN: One God, the Father Almighty, One Lord Jesus Christ, One Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son; have mercy upon us, Thy children, and make us all One in Thee.

HALLOWED BE THY NAME: Thou, Who art One Lord, and Thy name One; have mercy upon us all, who are called by Thy name, and make us more and more One in Thee.

THY KINGDOM COME: O King of Righteousness and Peace, gather us more and more into Thy Kingdom, and make us both visibly and invisibly One in Thee.

THY WILL BE DONE IN EARTH, AS IT IS IN HEAVEN: Thou, Who hast declared unto us the mystery of Thy will, to "gather together in One all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth;" conform us, O Lord, to that holy will of Thine, and make us all One in Thee.

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD: Thou in Whom we being many are One Bread and One Body; grant that we, being all partakers of that One Bread, may day by day be more and more One in Thee.

AND FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES AS WE FORGIVE THEM THAT TRESPASS AGAINST US: Thou, Who didst say, *Father, forgive them,* for those who were rending Thy blessed Body, forgive us the many

things we have done to mar the unity of Thy mystical Body, and make us, forgiving and loving one another, to be more and more One in Thee.

AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION: As Thou didst enable Thine apostles to continue with Thee in Thy temptations; so enable us, by Thy grace, to abide with Thee in Thy true Church, under all trials, visible and invisible, nor ever to cease from being One in Thee.

BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL: From the enemy and false accuser; from envy and grudging; from an unquiet and discontented spirit; from heresy and schism; from strife and debate; from a scornful temper, and reliance on our own understanding; from offence given or taken; and from whatever might disturb Thy Church and cause it to be less One in Thee.

Good Lord, deliver and preserve Thy Servants for ever.

APPENDIX.

(Page 21).—*The sin of Jeroboam.*

I HAVE ventured to suggest that the liability of Israel to idolatry, as compared with the Southern Kingdom, is to be attributed to the schism of Jeroboam. Certain it is that the golden calves, which were originally intended to be no more than the symbol of the true God, soon became idols in the same gross sense that Dagon's image was an idol (1 Kings xiv. 9; 2 Chron. xi. 15). That which was a breach of the Second Commandment, or a corrupt worship of Jehovah, lapsed into an open breach of the First Commandment, or the setting up of false gods. So did a worship which Jeroboam "devised of his own heart" drift rapidly further from God.

The history of all schism shows how the power of *resistance to error* is weakened. Its creed is constantly shifting its ground. (Compare, for example, the creed of Wesley with the Wesleyan teaching of to-day!) The reason is plain. There is no appeal to a fixed standard of Divine Truth. It starts from a human standard of truth, and what man has devised, man considers himself able and entitled to improve on. One by one the old inherited tenets are given up. The chain of religious descent is parted, and an ever-widening interval separates the parted fragment from that which is fixed.

But there is another characteristic of schism. It seems to lack power of *revival.*

This seems to be almost the chief lesson to be drawn

from the history of the kingdom of Israel, especially when we consider how lamentably short the one vigorous attempt fell, when "*Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel.* Howbeit from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, Jehu departed not from after them, to wit, the golden calves that were in Bethel, and that were in Dan." That this was accepted as a partial reformation is apparent from the next verse: "and the Lord said unto Jehu, Because thou hast done well in executing that which is right in Mine eyes, and hast done unto the house of Ahab according to all that was in Mine heart, thy children of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel. But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord God of Israel *with all his heart:* for he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, which made Israel to sin" (2 Kings x. 28—31).

All this is the more remarkable when we consider that there was no lack of external stimulus on God's part towards a genuine revival. Even though two such prophets as Elijah and Elisha, not to mention the prophet out of Judah (1 Kings xiii.); Ahijah (1 Kings xiv.); Micaiah (1 Kings xxii. 17); Jonah (2 Kings xiv. 25), spent their lives in warning the disobedient and denouncing the impenitent, yet there was no revival. The previous history of the Chosen People furnishes no parallel to this. Was it not because the religion was dead at the core, and no digging and dunging about its roots could restore it? The only life it ever had was the life it derived from the parent stem, and this was drying up.

Not but that there were many in each generation who were true servants of God in the Northern Kingdom (1 Kings xix. 18; 2 Chron. xi. 16; xxx. 11).

Is not this, in a greater or less degree, the case with all separated bodies?—if, indeed, those can rightly be termed bodies which lack the inherent unity and vitality of a body. There is *individual* life, but not *corporate* life; and this life

of the individual rarely, if ever, seems to react upon the life of the body. There is almost a counter tendency. A new leader of exceptional zeal and eminence not seldom entails a fresh departure and a further subdivision.

The history of Judah marks the contrast. It is the history of a succession of real and effectual revivals of true religion. Is not the explanation to be found in the fact that in Judah there was the Temple, the true priesthood and the prescribed services (2 Chron. xiii. 10, 11), whereas in Israel it was found impossible to rally upon a schism from the Church or to appeal to a departure from the faith? To take the two chief Reformations of Judah;—that in the reign of Joash emanated from Jehoiada, God's High Priest (2 Kings xi. 17); while Shaphan the scribe and Hilkiah the High Priest were associated in the Reformation under King Josiah (2 Kings xxii. xxiii.).

But to turn to those extraordinary messengers of God, the Prophets. They represent God's special dealings with the two kingdoms.

The distinction between the two sets (for there were two sets) is too strongly marked to be overlooked. The Prophets sent to Israel were Prophets of *action*, foremost among whom were Elijah and Elisha. Those raised up in Judah may be described as *Scripture* Prophets, including the great names of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, besides nine out of the twelve Minor Prophets.

The former uttered God's threatenings against the disobedient tribes, but the words that they uttered and the miracles that they wrought had but a local and temporary application. They were Prophets *to* rather than *of* Israel. Their mission was to sustain personal religion or to check national sin. They rebuked the schismatic altars and opposed the counterfeit priesthood (1 Kings xiii. 2; Amos vii. 10—17). They denounced the centres of the false religion (Hos. x. 5, 15; xiii. 2; Amos iii. 14; iv. 4; v. 5, 6; viii. 14).

The Prophets of Judah, on the other hand, attempt no interference, but rather co-operate with the authorized priesthood[1] (2 Kings xxii. 14). Their mission in actual practice is twofold. First, repression of evil and revival of good; and then, not merely reformation, but a carrying still further of the light of truth and revelation. It is this that distinguishes a real Divine revival from a human counterfeit. All that really lives *grows;* and each recovery after a falling away is followed by a further advance. It was so with the Prophets of Judah, who stimulated each successive revival. Each left behind him a fresh deposit of truth for his Church to dwell upon, a fresh addition to those oracles of God which were for generations yet unborn. They spoke of things to come, and the Messiah's advent. They wrote for all time, and contemplated a Church against which the gates of Hell should not prevail.

Some such distinction may be traced in God's dealings with the separated communities and the Church in this land. In the ranks of the former it is not uncommon to hear that in this city or that locality a revival is taking place. But though real, and zealously fanned for a time, the light flares and burns out.

Not so with the Church. Revival succeeds each period of depression. It is never the result of human elaboration, but it springs and grows men know not how (Mark iv. 27). It is spread over a long course of years, and like the flow of the rising tide it gradually but insensibly carries the general level of Church life higher than before. The new warmth may be kindled in one quarter, but sooner or later the thrill of life reaches the numbed extremities of the body. The very Church fabrics confirm this statement. They are

[1] "It is a vulgar error respecting Jewish history to suppose that there was an antagonism between the Prophets and the Priests. There is not a trace of such antagonism." (*Smith's Dictionary s.v.* "*Prophet.*")

distributed over every quarter of the kingdom.[1] They are built for all time.

So that it comes to this, that while individual life is to be found in the Church and in the sects, it is in the former alone that *corporate* life, and consequently the power of revival is to be found. It is a Church, not a sect.[2]

[1] A reference to what is known as Lord Hampton's Return will show the remarkable enterprise in church building that has attended the present revival in the Church, and how equally distributed it has been all over the land.

[2] The Author gratefully acknowledges the kind help and valuable suggestions he has received in writing the above.

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